



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: July 10, 2024
Contact: Katrina Leckovic
Contact No.: 604.873.7998
RTS No.: 16478
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: July 16, 2024
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Mayor's Budget Task Force Implementation Oversight Committee

FROM: City Clerk

SUBJECT: Report Back – Meeting Cost Estimates and Jurisdictional Scan of Finance Committees

Recommendations

THAT the Mayor's Budget Task Force Implementation Oversight Committee receive this report for information.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report responds to two requests to staff from the Mayor's Budget Task Force Implementation Oversight Committee, made at the Committee meeting of July 2 and 8, 2024, as follows:

- a cost estimate for staff resources for a potential Finance Standing Committee of Council; and
- a jurisdictional scan of comparable Canadian municipalities of similar size and whether they have standing committees of Council dedicated to budgetary and/or finance matters.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- [Section 159](#) of the *Vancouver Charter* allows Council to provide for such committees as it sees fit, and [Section 160](#) states that all committees of Council shall stand discharged immediately before the first Monday after November 1 in the year of a general local election.
- On [January 23, 2024](#), Council received the Mayor's Budget Task Force Report for information and appointed the Implementation Oversight Committee to bring recommendations back to Council

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

Recommendation #5 of the [Mayor's Budget Task Force Report](#) states:

Appoint a Finance Committee composed of Council members with financial expertise and a strong interest in budgetary matters. This committee would report to Council and engage fully with staff in all aspects of the budget process to ensure that Council's priorities and directions are appropriately reflected. The Committee and staff would be jointly responsible for briefing Council in advance of the budget approval process to ensure that all Council members are confident about the budgetary decisions that had been made, along with the financial and service implications of those decisions. In upholding the Vancouver Charter's requirements that the Council provide budgetary directive in public forums, the Committee would act as a consistent intermediary between Council and City staff, where all decisions related to budgetary matters would remain reserved for Council Chambers in public.

At the Mayor's Budget Task Force Implementation Oversight Committee meeting of July 2 and 8, 2024, the Committee requested that staff report back with:

- a cost estimate for staff resources for a potential Finance Standing Committee of Council; and
- a jurisdictional scan of comparable Canadian municipalities of similar size and whether they have standing committees of Council dedicated to budgetary and/or finance matters.

Discussion

Staffing Cost Estimate

Creating a new Council committee, whether it includes all Council members or a subset of Council members, is a major undertaking that affects the entire organization and should be part of a broader consideration of the City's governance structure. If a new Finance Committee is established, the City Clerk's Office will require additional resources as outlined below.

The Legislative Operations team, which supports Council meetings and other related functions, has remained nearly the same size over the past 25 years. This 8-person team manages Council meetings, in-camera meetings, standing committees (including AGC), public hearings, business licence hearings, Council staff briefings, and a variable number of Council advisory committees (typically around 7). The meeting team handles pre-, in-, and post-meeting work, including coordinating with staff/external presenters, formatting reports, preparing and posting agendas, registering speakers, preparing scripts, taking minutes, and other duties. Although 2 staff members were added between 2016 and 2020 to support civic agencies and the Nomination Subcommittee, no additional support has been provided to the Council meeting team. This is despite the addition of an Auditor General Committee, Mayor's Budget Task Force Implementation Committee, and an increased number of Business Licence Hearing meetings due to new short-term rental regulations. Before 2020, 2 staff members were typically needed

per meeting. However, since the introduction of electronic participation in all meetings of Council, a third staff member is now required to manage phone lines. Additionally, the City Clerk or a Deputy City Clerk now attends all meetings of Council due to their increased complexity (until 7 years ago, they did not attend public hearings).

The following estimates for administrative costs related to a potential Finance Committee are based on the average hourly rates of City Clerk's Office staff and account for pre- (approximately 17 hours of staff time) and post- (approximately 11 hours of staff time) meeting administrative tasks. These tasks can vary dramatically depending on factors like report volume and complexity, the number of public speakers, and the schedules and preparation of non-City Clerk's Office staff (departmental staff, consultants). These estimates do not include meeting costs associated with Technological Services and Corporate Protective Services staffing.

Approximate Council meeting staffing costs (City Clerk's Office only):

Full-day meetings (6.5 hours): \$6,729 per meeting

- 3 meetings per year: \$20,187
- 5 meetings per year: \$33,645
- 9 meetings per year: \$60,561

Half-day meetings (3.5 hours): \$5931 per meeting

- 3 meetings per year: \$17,793
- 5 meetings per year: \$29,655
- 9 meetings per year: \$53,379

Please note that additional CCO administrative costs are incurred if ASL or Closed Captioning services are provided during a meeting, which includes additional coordination work and accommodation of specific accessibility needs.

Based on the above meeting estimates, adding another standing committee to an already over-capacity team would likely require the addition of one meeting staff member.

Jurisdictional Scan

As requested by the Committee, staff conducted a cursory scan of comparable sized Canadian municipalities, based on population (approximately between 200,000 and 700,000). Results are attached as Appendix A. In addition to considering whether a municipality has a budget/finance committee with a defined mandate, staff included letter grades for financial accountability as assessed by the C.D. Howe Institute ([see report here](#)).

Financial Implications

Adding a Finance Committee without simultaneously changing or reducing other meeting management services provided by Legislative Operations staff would necessitate additional staff resources in the City Clerk's Office as outlined in this report.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this informational report.

* * * * *

Appendix A - Jurisdictional Scan of Finance Committees

Municipality	Population	Council Size (including Mayor)	Electoral System	Financial Accountability Letter Grade*	Budget/Finance Committee?	Website	Mandate/Scope	Membership
Hamilton	569,353	16	Ward	F	Audit, Finance and Administration Committee	https://bm-public-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/BoardDetails/BoardInformation/2	Internal/external audits Oversight of internal control, financial reporting Human Resources - programs and services Programs related to Financial Planning and Policy, Treasury Services, Customer Service, Information Technology, Legislative Services, Records Management, Legal Services, Procurement and Risk Management Access & Equity	All
					General Issues Committee (Budget)	https://bm-public-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/BoardDetails/BoardInformation/138	Council Strategic Plan Corporate Strategic Plan MPMP, OMBI Annual Operating, Rate and Capital Budgets Economic Development matters Portfolio Management Strategy – Real Estate Acquisitions/Disposals Hamilton International Airport matters G.R.I.D.S. Our Future Hamilton Department Work Programs: Planning and Economic Development Legal Services – litigation matters Human Resources – labour negotiations Departmental Organizational Structure Changes Boards and Agencies Hamilton Utilities Corporation Any and all other matters which Council chooses to refer to the General Issues Committee for consideration	All
Kitchener	470,015	11	Ward	D-	Finance and Corporate Services Committee	https://www.kitchener.ca/en/council-and-city-administration/standing-committees.aspx	Considers operational issues in the financial services and corporate services departments, budget, and other services related to the Municipal Code, such as licensing matters.	All
London	422,324	15	Ward	F	Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee	https://london.ca/government/council-civic-administration/committees-task-forces/standing-committees	The Committee oversees the budget as well as other strategic initiatives.	All
Markham	338,503	13	Ward/Regional	A-	Budget Committee	https://www.markham.ca/wps/portal/home/about/city-hall/council-committee-meetings/03-council-committee-meetings	Reviews the City operating and capital budgets	All
Mississauga	717,961	12	Ward	C+	Budget Committee	https://www.mississauga.ca/council/committees/budget-committee/	Discuss, decide and recommend the City budget.	All

Oshawa	415,311	12	Ward	N/A	Corporate and Finance Services Committee	https://www.oshawa.ca/en/city-hall/committees.aspx	Matters related to Finance Services, Human Resources, Innovation and Transformation, Information, Technology Services, and Legal Services, subject matters under the authority of the Office of the C.A.O. which relate to the Corporate and Finance Services Committee and any City Branches or outside agencies reporting to Council on matters similar to matters listed under the authority of the Corporate and Finance Services Department.	5 Councillors
Quebec City	550,438	22	Ward	A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Richmond	230,584	9	At-large	A	Finance Committee	https://www.richmond.ca/city-hall/city-council/boards/standing.htm	N/A	All
Saskatoon	266,141	11	Ward	A-	Standing Policy Committee on Finance	https://bm-public-saskatoon.escribemeetings.com/BoardDetails/BoardInformation/69	The policy areas for the Finance Committee include: (a) finance; (b) revenue collection; (c) assessment; (d) audits; (e) all land matters including acquisitions, sales and leases of land, and the land development program; (f) vehicles and equipment, not including Transit and Fire vehicles and equipment; (g) controlled and statutory corporations; (h) implementation of business planning and budget; and (i) any other related area.	5 Councillors and Mayor
Surrey	568,322	9	At-large	B+	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vancouver	662,248	11	At-large	A-	Standing Committee on City Finance and Services	https://vancouver.ca/your-government/types-of-city-council-meetings.aspx	N/A	All
					Mayor's Budget Task Force Implementation Oversight Committee	N/A	Evaluate and oversee the implementation of some or all of the recommendations in the January 2024 City of Vancouver Mayor's Budget Task Force Report.	3 Councillors
Victoria	397,237	9	At-large	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Windsor	236,642	10	Ward	F	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Winnipeg	749,607	15	Ward	C+	Standing Policy Committee on Finance and Economic Development	https://clkapps.winnipeg.ca/dm/s/SelectDocumentType.asp?CommitteeType=FI	N/A	4 Councillors

*https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Commentary_657.pdf