

**2004 BUDGET PUBLIC INPUT AND INFORMATION SESSION
OF THE CITY OF GREATER SUDBURY**

**Tom Davies Square
Sudbury, Ward 6**

**Tuesday, March 2, 2004
Commencement: 7:31 p.m.**

Chair

COUNCILLOR TED CALLAGHAN, IN THE CHAIR

Present

Councillors Berthiaume; Bradley; Dupuis; Gasparini; Reynolds;
Rivest

City Officials

M. Mieto, Chief Administrative Officer; D. Wuksinic, General Manager, Corporate Services; D. Nadorozny, General Manager of Economic Development & Planning Services; S. Jonasson, Director of Finance/City Treasurer; T. Speirs, Chief Field Inspector; G. Prieur, CIP Facilitator; J. Bulfon, Foreperson/Inspector; D. Stefankow, Instrumentperson; T. Mowry, City Clerk; CJ Caporale, Council Secretary

C.U.P.E. Local 4705

W. MacKinnon, President; F. Posadowski, Recording Secretary

News Media

Sudbury Star; MCTV; EZ Rock; CBC Radio-Canada

Welcome and
Opening Remarks

Councillor Callaghan welcomed the 41 people in attendance to the 2004 Budget Public Input and Information Session, Roundtable Discussions and Review of Budget Options. He advised the purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for the public to give Council some direction on how they would like this year's budget pressures addressed.

Doug Wuksinic, General Manager of Corporate Services, outlined the format for the Roundtable Discussions to those present. He indicated that input was being sought on four questions:

1. What level of municipal service do you expect?
Should any services be reduced or eliminated?
2. Should those who use a service pay for the service (user fees) and/or should everyone share in the cost (taxes)?
3. What services would you like to see improved or added?
4. Should the City borrow money and/or implement a special levy to fix roads, repair arenas, replace fire trucks, maintain police communications, etc.?

Question #1

What level of municipal service do you expect?
Should any services be reduced or eliminated?

Table 1

Table 1 felt that services should be maintained but reduce street lighting, crossing guards and implement the automated attendant telephone service for the Call Centre at Tom Davies Square. They questioned why the Greater Sudbury Police Services' allocation was so high. They felt that to keep the City's values up front, they would have to maintain a sustainable environment and maintain the quality of life for all citizens.

Table 2

Table 2 was concerned about the cancelling of City buses in Lively and Copper Cliff and felt that because everyone pays taxes, this should not happen. They stated that Council should take a closer look at in-house budgeting and decrease the use of vehicles, reduce the size of City buses, etc.

Table 3

Table 3 would like to retain the level of services that citizens are enjoying at this time but this does not mean that activities should not be reviewed. As a direction, they encourage the City to maintain the level of services but try to be more creative in approaching various tasks.

Table 3 also stated that the City should reduce the use of consultants and utilize the talent that is currently on the City's payroll.

Table 4

Mr. Jerry O'Brien informed the Committee that he had circulated a petition around the City regarding the hiring of more front line police officers. He stated that everyone who signed the petition would like to see more visible police officers because of the increase of break-ins and armed robberies. He obtained quotes from insurance companies within the City of Greater Sudbury and North Bay. He stated that house insurance on a \$100,000 home, in Sudbury, costs us \$202 more than insurance in North Bay. The reason being the police shortage in Sudbury.

Table 4 does not agree with the closure of municipal museums. This table felt that museums are a legitimate and a much needed extension of education. Museums enrich the community and help the economy by attracting tourism. They employ summer students who in return contribute to the local economy and helps to continue their education. In order for the City to instill pride in the community, they should promote the museums instead of closing them. If the City destroys museums, it sends a message to the volunteers and the children of volunteers, "volunteer efforts are and were worthless and the community has no use for you".

Table 7

Table 7 thought that most of the smaller items on the list should not be changed. They stated that Council should not reduce the level of service and should not close the museums and the facilities. They agree with the hiring of staff for the collection of the POA fines which would bring in a revenue of \$205,000. They also stated that Council and staff should explore ways of eliminating large costs of inspection and the supervising of capital projects by forming partnerships with contractors. The City should consult the private sector to see how they perform these partnerships. Table 7 also felt that the purchasing of preferred shares from Greater Sudbury Utilities Inc. is not necessary.

Table 9

Table 9 looked at the services that are to be eliminated and felt that it was not fair to the smaller communities. The smaller communities deserve equal treatment. Table 9 felt that there were safety concerns with the elimination of crossing guards. They agreed with the elimination of two By-law officers but did not agree with eliminating summer student jobs. They felt that a lot of the services could be provided by utilizing youth volunteers and workers from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

Table 11

Table 11 consisted of citizens who represented the outlying communities, the Salvation Army and three different baseball leagues. They would like the City to maintain the level of municipal services. One question they asked was, "How is the City of Greater Sudbury going to harmonize the City with outlying areas regarding the care and maintenance of fields? How can you compare the fields in the outlying areas to the fields in Sudbury? They stated that their fields were upgraded previous to the amalgamation and that everything was paid for.

Table 11 stated they would like to see the transit system to continue operating in the outlying areas, and, also stated that the museums must remain open. They also would like to see how these are to be harmonized.

Question #2

Should those who use a service pay for the service (user fees) and/or should everyone share in the cost (taxes)?

Table 1

Table 1 stated that the City should implement and maintain user fees and that if citizens have more than three garbage bags, then a user fee should be attached to this. This table expressed their view that user fees should not prohibit children from taking the bus to the community centres; be involved in sports; and, participate in community activities.

Table 3

With the consensus of the table, Table 3 felt that some user fees are legitimate but within reason, meaning that any increases that could be looked at should be limited to the rate of inflation. The reason being that such increases could hurt the less fortunate to the point of eliminating them from being able to participate in activities. Table 3 felt that there was a basic public support for infrastructures but at the same time, they would only support a decent increase for those who use or benefit from these infrastructures such as arenas, pools, ski hills or playing fields.

Table 3 agreed with borrowing money only for roads. They felt that Council should make every possible effort to work with other municipalities to put pressure on the Provincial and Federal government to help the City of Greater Sudbury to meet the obligations they were burdened with by the amalgamation. They also stated that the CRF has not increased in the last six years which was to provide support for some of these obligations.

Table 4

Table 4 was concerned with the harmonization of minor sports playing fields in Rayside-Balfour. They stated that these fields do not have the same quality of service as the fields within the City and Council wants to charge the same price. They felt that this should be looked at and the increase in fees, in outlying areas, should be at the same rate as the fees within the City.

Table 5

Table 5 indicated that they were from a smaller community and that the services to the smaller communities were not equalized. They felt that the harmonization of user fees, especially when looking at baseball and soccer fields, would mean the equalization of services as well. They stated that they would be happy to pay double the price if they received the same type of service and the same quality of fields. They felt that it was important to continue to encourage wellness, health and fitness in the community. They indicated that many communities volunteer a lot of hours and that they would continue, but they also need the City's support.

Table 6

Table 6 felt that user fees should be reasonable and that nothing should be done to harm the health, well being and quality of life in the City.

Table 7

Table 7 was not in favour of raising user fees at the arenas or pools because they were concerned that health costs would increase due to lower participation at these facilities. They felt that these services should be supported by a community tax levy. They stated that in order to decrease the costs or to get a better cost recovery from the arenas, the City should implement more creative ways by selling more advertisements at the arenas, licensing fast food chains to operate the concession stands instead of tendering them out, or look for corporate sponsorship that these facilities could be named after.

Table 7
(continued)

Table 7 indicated that to recover the cost of Solid Waste, Council should investigate a bag tag system by giving each household a certain number of free bags per year and then slowly decreasing that number to a predetermined number. They felt that educating people about recycling would recover some of the costs and reduce the strain on landfills.

Table 9

Table 9 agreed with a full cost recovery for Solid Waste and agreed that the increase of user fees would encourage people to recycle more. They disagreed with the increase of user fees for summer day camps because some parents would not be able to afford them and felt that the children would suffer.

Table 11

Table 11 stated that those who use the services should pay for the services and that the increase in taxes should be shared. They are a group of three ball leagues who will be paying \$20,000 more for the fields used. They stated that there was many manhours of volunteerism put into the fields to bring them to the condition they are currently in. They also indicated that the fees are doubling in soccer, which is a sport that many children play, is a growing sport because the costs are lower than hockey or baseball, and by doubling these fees, it would eliminate some people from this sport. Table 11 indicated that some fields are in excellent condition and some are in poor condition. They felt that harmonization seemed to mean a climb upwards as far as bringing everyone into line with each other and felt that a pro-rated system be used by looking at the condition of the fields and implement a charge accordingly.

General Comments

Table 9 stated that if the large commercial chains were given the arena food concessions, then the non-profit organizations, that run most of the canteens, would lose their funding, which they use to service special people in the community.

Question #3 & #4

What service would you like to see improved or added?
Should the City borrow money and/or implement a special levy to fix roads, repair arenas, replace fire trucks, maintain police communications, etc.?

Table 1

Table 1 stated that the City of Greater Sudbury needs to improve their image to the rest of the province and nationally. The City needs to improve their recreation opportunities such as implementing more access to community centres for the youth of the communities. Table 1 felt that the City should look in-house for expertise, and refrain from hiring outside expertise. They felt that more should be done for the downtown core. They also felt that the City needs to support social services particularly mental health. They stated that mental health reform is taking place across the province and that cities need to recognize their role in the mental health reform. They suggested that the City must increase the

Table 1
(continued)

opportunities for youth involvement, not only in processes like tonight, but also in decision making for other activities and decisions that are remained at the City. They felt that Sudbury should be more diverse and inclusive regarding immigration.

Table 3

Table 3 stated that they were overwhelmed by the length of the list. They stated that the City should review the current situation regarding handi-transit because the population is getting older and consequently there will be a progressive need for more of such services. They felt there was insufficient information on the current status of this service but they agreed there should be money available.

Table 3 felt that the Quarter Century & Retirement Banquet should be reinstated. They felt that the sum of \$15,000 should be found in the budget and that the City of Greater Sudbury should recognize this as a tribute of thanks for the employees' services.

Table 3 felt that the snow plowing and snow removal from church properties should be eliminated. They stated that a 'courtesy cleaning' in front of church property for funeral services is agreeable.

Table 4

Table 4 stated that a total for the amount of money paid into sewer and water charges has not been provided. The amounts in those accounts should be considerable. Therefore, Table 4 felt that the City's infrastructure should be somewhat taken care of.

Table 4 stated that because there were no increases in taxes in the past decade, it caused the City problems. They felt that if there were slight increases implemented, then the City would not be in the mess they currently find themselves. They indicated that they would like Council to inform the citizens where the City stands. They felt that there should be tax increases in order to maintain the current level of services.

Table 7

Table 7 stated that funding for beds, for the homeless, at the Salvation Army and L'Association des jeunes de la rue should be provided and that the breakfast program should be maintained. Table 7 also felt that there should be a reduction of Amnesty Saturdays from 4 to 2 with a reduction of \$100,000.

Table 7 advised the Committee that they represent the new Volunteer Centre and are requesting funding from Council. They stated that this was a service that should be added to the City of Greater Sudbury. They stated that in 2001 a report was submitted to Council from the Mayor's task force on Community Involvement and Volunteerism which identified that "citizens want an

Table 7
(continued)

organizational structure similar to a volunteer bureau that can promote community involvement and volunteerism, provide excellent recruitment and marketing, deliver effective training and give award recognition." They advised the Committee that the services the City could not provide volunteers would step in. Volunteer Sudbury/Bénévolat Sudbury has been formed with a volunteer board of directors. They advised the Committee that the City took a survey on their behalf, surveying the general public and community organizations that are volunteered driven, and it was clear, even though there was only 53% respondents in the public survey, it was indicated that 65% felt that there was a need for a volunteer centre. 80% of the respondents from volunteer driven organizations agreed that a volunteer centre was needed for the community and 69% stated that we need volunteers continuously throughout the year.

The volunteer centre was achieved through a partnership with United Way, Meals on Wheels, Social Planning Council, Laurentian University and a dozen of other partners. The volunteer centre has a very strong support from the community. The number of volunteers have declined from 31% of the population to 27% and is decreasing. It works out that about 7% of Canadians provide 73% of all volunteer hours. This trend cannot continue, so we need to promote volunteerism. The volunteer centre know that most people have no idea where they can go to find an opportunity to volunteer and would turn to the City. They feel that their service would save the City some direct cost in that where services have to be cut back to meet budget needs, volunteers would step in and the volunteer centre would provide all that.

Volunteer Sudbury/Bénévolat Sudbury is asking Council for two optional proposals. They indicated that they have a contract with HRSD which will take them to the end of October, however, they are asking the City for an amount of \$15,110, which would provide for a service delivery person and a program delivery person, which would continue to the end of the fiscal year 2004-2005. They also stated that a volunteer centre isn't of much use if people were not aware of its existence and the decrease of volunteerism. They would need to promote volunteerism in the community, so they had a marketing professional make an estimate of marketing costs and is asking Council for half of the cost. They are hoping to achieve donations for the rest. They are requesting \$6,000 from Council for marketing fees with a total of \$21,110. They felt that it is a service most communities have and it has been offered in Sudbury before but funding challenges closed those services.

Table 9

Table 9 addressed the concerns from the Sudbury Arts Council. They would like the City of Greater Sudbury to encourage an umbrella for advertising benefits. Presently, there is no enhancement in the City's budget for advertising, and they would like to see unification involving the City, Sudbury Arts Council and other organizations. They felt that one umbrella would promote everything in the City.

Table 9 identified themselves as being the founder of "Save the Children, Stop Sexual Abuse" and asked Council to donate the \$1500 that would cost their organization for sign permits. Currently, they have 10-15 signs in the City of Greater Sudbury and 40 highway billboards from Sault Ste. Marie to North Bay and Manitoulin Island. The Ministry of Transportation's fees, for the signs on the highway, are \$110 per year per sign. The City of Greater Sudbury charges a one time fee of \$107 per sign. They advised the Committee that each sign costs \$1000 and their budget for last year was \$40,000. They are currently working with 68,000 victims, within the City of Greater Sudbury, and this number increases daily. They asked the Committee if the City of Greater Sudbury would donate the \$107 for each permit they would need.

Table 11

Table 11 stated that most shelters, like the Salvation Army, is operating at 1950 capacity and service and they need to come up to the year 2000+ service. They stated that the shelters are grossly understaffed and underfunded. They advised the Committee that the City of Greater Sudbury has helped one of the shelters with this year and last year's deficit, but stated that the other shelters are running big deficits as well and will not be able to survive if things don't change. They also advised the Committee that these shelters operate under unsafe conditions at night, with only one staff working at night. They stated that if things do not improve, there will be no shelters in the near future.

General Comments

Table 11 stated that they were present at the last set of Information meetings in January and presented a request for a budget enhancement and they are back to plead for a 100% of the requested \$336,457 funding needs. Their budget pressures focus on the operation of a shelter which consists of 22 beds for the homeless. They are asking for funding for 25 regular beds plus 10 emergency beds with a total of 35 beds. They stated that they require the full amount because anything less would put the operation in jeopardy. They need to have on hand staffing supplies and equipment to provide excellent services. They indicated that the one thing that was omitted, with the anticipated occupancy they find it necessary to increase the overnight staff from 1 to 2 for safety reasons and stated that other agencies have pulled out of the shelter operations for this reason. They will be adding 1.4 full time equivalency to their staff. They would like to continue with their services and fill the gap in women's and children's services but need to be adequately funded.

Rating of Priorities

Each table was given an opportunity to rank each question in order of priority - from 1 to 5 - with 1 being the lowest priority and 5 being the highest priority. The purpose of this exercise was to give Council an overall guidance on how to address budget pressures facing the City.

The results are as follows:

Services should be reduced or eliminated.	22
Those who use a service should pay for the service (user fees).	19
Services should be improved or added.	30
City taxes should be increased to maintain services.	35
The City should borrow money and or implement a special levy to fix roads, etc.	29

Attachments

Charts showing the Rating of Priorities by Individual Tables and a Summary Rating of Priorities is attached.

Closing Remarks

The Chair expressed his appreciation to all those who provided their input and stated that this was a collective opinion and it was important to receive some meaning to the submissions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Councillor Callaghan, Chair
Finance Committee

Council Secretary