

**HIGHLIGHTS OF NOV. 30, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING*****New safety requirements for Council meetings help prevent spreading the coronavirus.***

*Presentations to Council by City staff and community members use online video conferencing technology. Watch City Council meetings live or view recordings at [campbellriver.ca/watch-live](http://campbellriver.ca/watch-live).*

**Councillor Michele Babchuk resigns to take on role as provincial representative for North Vancouver Island**

Following her election as provincial member of the legislative assembly, Councillor Michele Babchuk has resigned from City Council. Council extended thanks and praise for the difference Councillor Babchuk has made during her time as: School district representative and board chair; City Councillor and SRD director and board chair. Council members also noted that they will miss her perspective at the Council table and extended best wishes and the expectation that she will continue to bring benefit to the community, region and the province in her new role. A report on the Dec. 14 meeting agenda will outline a plan for a 2021 by-election to fill Councillor Babchuk's vacancy.

**Financial planning discussion continues – highlights of proposed 2021 budget**

Using a portion of the \$4.6 million from a provincial COVID Safe Restart grant and an additional \$160,000 in property tax revenue related to new construction could relieve some of the pressure on the City's base budget. The proposed budget now includes an even lower tax increase (2.78 per cent versus the 2.85 per cent maximum endorsed following October meetings).

Council expressed deep concern about the financial impact of the pandemic on our residents and local businesses and wants to further discuss and carefully consider the use of the provincial Safe Restart grant funding to best benefit our community.

Council will meet Dec. 9 to consider the first three readings of the proposed 2021-2030 financial plan bylaw and has requested a dedicated meeting early in the new year to consider use of the remaining provincial grant funding.

The City anticipates another challenging year ahead in 2021 and is working to ensure Campbell River is well-positioned to adjust as pandemic unfolds and eventually resolves.

With one exception, the proposed plan for 2021 preserves Council's budget decisions made in October, including more than \$1.25 million in service cuts – of which \$360,200 are permanent cost savings. The proposed budget includes funding to operate the Centennial Pool in 2021 (if public health restrictions allow) as well as \$69,000 for a COVID-safe by-election and a significant investment in downtown safety (select committee, matching grants for building and property improvements). The proposed plan also includes improvements for Campbellton that include a riverside parklette and wayfinding signs that promote safe, outdoor activity and connection to the river and natural surroundings. These projects are based on conceptual ideas developed by Vancouver Island University students with \$10,000 in City funding.

**Downtown safety select committee moving forward**

Council confirmed plans to appoint seven voting members to the committee, with one member of Council, a bylaw enforcement officer and the RCMP Inspector as non-voting members. As necessary, the committee will engage with representatives of downtown facilities and social services organizations to help provide Council with recommendations for improving safety within the City's downtown core, including how best to best allocate \$225,000 budgeted for safety initiatives in 2021.

**COVID-19**

**Please note:** We have new procedures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

For the most recent information on City services, please see our website [campbellriver.ca/COVID-19](http://campbellriver.ca/COVID-19)

Reach us with general inquires by email: [info@campbellriver.ca](mailto:info@campbellriver.ca) or telephone 250-286-5700.

People appointed to the committee are:

- Ben Lanyon
- Brett Giese
- Rodney Semkiw
- Heather Gordon-Murphy
- Patty Webster
- Jonathan Shead
- Dan Samson

Council liaison to the select committee will be Ron Kerr, with Councillor Kermit Dahl as alternate. The City is working to schedule a first meeting in December to launch the committee's four-month term.

### **Destination Campbell River's 2021 plan**

Council approved Destination Campbell River's plan for 2021 following a presentation by executive director Kirsten Soder. The plan will be submitted to the Province as a requirement of the hotel tax program. With a 57 per cent occupancy rate for local tourism accommodation, Campbell River is ahead of Vancouver Island's 50 per cent average, and the hotel tax program is on track to meet its revenue goal for the year.

Destination Campbell River completed an updated five-year Rolling Tourism Strategy in February 2020, which was reviewed in April to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the local tourism industry.

Key strategies include ongoing destination promotion and a three-phase plan that considers the impact of COVID-19 and focuses on destination promotion focused on domestic travellers, visitor services, destination development, reputation enhancement, advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

### **HIGHLIGHTS of SPECIAL NOV. 23 COMMITTEE of the WHOLE MEETING**

Campbell River City Council will begin quarterly meetings with forestry and aquaculture representatives to promote regular information sharing. Mayors from Gold River, Sayward, Port McNeill and Port Hardy will also be invited to attend so that the region can effectively advocate on behalf of these industries through networks such as the Association of Vancouver Island and Coast Communities, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

At the Nov. 23 meeting, City Council and Mayors Brad Unger (Gold River), Gaby Wickstrom (Port McNeill), and Dennis Dugas, (Port Hardy) heard from five delegations: Brian Stamp (Business Recovery Task Force); John Paul Fraser (BC Salmon Farmers); Bob Brash (Truck Loggers Association); Stuart Glen (Western Forest Products); and Molly Hudson and Aaron Racher (Mosaic Forest Management).

Mayor Andy Adams extended special thanks to the volunteers on Campbell River's Business Recovery Task Force for initiating the discussions.

Watch the recording of meeting on the City website.

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