



RIDEAU LAKES GRASSROOTS GROUP

<https://rlgrassroots.com/>

Key moments:

Township of Rideau Lakes Council Mtg - Municipal Services Committee (GG)

25 Sep 2023

Video link:

<https://pub-rideaulakes.escribemeetings.com/Players/ISISStandAlonePlayer.aspx?Id=e544c7bd-d089-46ae-8312-77ef63df5edc>

We've highlighted the key points in the meeting dealing with the fiscal management of the township and how some councillors seem not to care about how spending will have a material direct and long-term impact on taxes. Open the [video link](#) and use the slider at the bottom of the vide to advance to the start of the discussion as noted below.

Note: Format of times shown hours : minutes : seconds into the video. Some timings do not include the exact second where the dialogue takes place.

Key moments

Theme	What	Grassroots Group Comments	Begins	End
Treasurer report	Treasurer's report Long Term Financial Stability Plan (LTFSP)	Informative walk through of report showing dire state of township's long term financial picture.	00:10:34	1:45:00
	Comments from Mayor	Emphasizes concerns and need for a plan before further spending.	00:17:18	00:20:00
	Comments from Councillor Delaney	Like the mayor, she states how sobering the plan is.	00:20:01	00:20:00
	Comments from Councillor Hutchings	Expresses like concerns.	00:21:37	00:22:47
	Comments from Councillor P. Banks	Expresses concerns and sets table for blaming past councils in later discussions instead of acknowledging need and being onside for planning.	00:23:40	00:24:08
	Councillor Dunfield and Treasurer: Many questions to treasurer	At 00:26:43 treasurer explains there is no extra funding to help with Portland Hall Library costs as there were with Hub and why (no Building Code Services people).	00:25:12	00:28:35
	Mayor provides further explanation.	Outlines macro picture.	00:28:36	00:29:07
	Councillor Dunfield on South Elmsley pump track.	Dunfield seems not to understand (or perhaps ignores) that the majority of the	00:29:50	00:32:06

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		\$570K funding is from grants, donations, and upper-level funding.		
	Councillor Dunfield on Newboro docks	Seems to suggest more capital spending is required and a priority but no source for the funding is known.	00:32:06	00:33:42
	Treasurer explaining to Councillor Dunfield the impact of no reserves.	Emotional discussion. At 00:35:15 the Treasurer explains the council can't afford what it appears to be doing since there are no reserves. Despite it being contrary to fiscal best practices for municipalities, having low or no reserves is something that councillor Jeff Banks frequently advocates for.	00:33:43	00:36:05
New firehall funding	Motion to pre-approve loan application to funding new firehall construction (replacing Portland one destroyed by fire). Motion passed.		00:37:29	
Portland Hall Library	Motion to pre-approve capital funding to apply for \$3M Ontario Construction Loan.	All councillors speak to the motion. It is at times emotional and demonstrates lack of understanding of some councillors on financial matters or perhaps a desire to ignore the facts presented.	00:39:37	1:09:24
	Councillor Dunfield states she is not good at math.	Apparently, this is a reason for not comprehending financial consequences.	00:41:55	00:42:30
	To provide context, the CAO factually explains past (Portland Hub) scenario vs today.	00:54:54 As she often does, P. Banks misrepresents what happened with Fire Hall cost overruns, blaming staff , claiming unanimous vote and adding a 4th bay was before she was a councillor. A frustrated Mayor calls her out.	00:51:33	00:56:39
	Councillor Carr complains about Hall being ripped down.	Chief Admin. Officer gives common sense rationale reminding council why this occurred.	00:58:43	01:00:00
	Mayor pleads with council not to pass motion.	Mayor emphatically states if the motion passes, it would be worst decision in in his 40 years of municipal experience, ignores LTFSP realities; this is to approve borrowing, not spending even if not currently required due to far from complete design process.	01:09:28	
	Vote passed 5 to 4 with Carr, Dunfield, P. Banks, J. Banks and Hutchings voting in favor.	This is contrary to the recommendations of the Treasurer in view of long-term financing implications. Basically, proceeding with Portland Hall/Library, even at \$3M is not possible without a 3% tax increase. It will also cause Rideau Lakes to be unable to undertake other	1:10:21	

Theme	What	Grassroots Group Comments	Begins	End
		capital (larger) projects over next 5 years without one or more of a) tax increases greater than 3% or b) service reductions.		
Portland Hall Library Class C Estimates	Architect "Altered Root" explains "C" class estimate	A \$3.7M cost estimate – with likelihood of further increases (per estimator) is presented.	1:15:26	2:22:00
	Councillor P. Banks states she will only support spending of up to \$3M.	P. Banks expresses desire to reduce size and remove items and seeks support for this but she unable to speak to specific financial impacts of her proposed reductions.	1:20:00	1:21:39
	Mayor expresses concerns regarding building standards for a Municipal building.	Legitimate worries of impact of cost reductions to long term viability of building.	1:21:40	1:24:04
	P Banks motion to reduce size of library.	CAO explains financial implications and that with reduced footprint (from HUB) project no longer qualified to upper-level funding or grants (no municipal offices). With smaller library, any possible grants will also be lost.	1:32:09	1:34:50
	Vote on P. Banks motion to reduce size of library defeated 5 to 4. 2nd P. Banks motion to remove hall meeting room defeated 6 to 3.	P. Banks will later paint "hero" picture on social media that she tried to reduce costs, but council did not support her. Paula didn't have financial details on reductions, but also, these "reductions" were put forward completely dismissing the actual requirements of the library and ignoring public consultations. She seemed to be ignorant of these matters. She also ignored the facts presented that stated the resulting reduction from her proposals would also result in the loss of all development grants. 2 of the "group of 5" councillors seemed to grasp this, and thus her motions were voted down.	1:50:00	
	Discussion on motion to have Altered Roots proceed with moving forward to 60% estimates.	Wiring for generator as required for emergency site is noted as included and then discussion took place to suggest the wiring be removed to save costs rendering the new Hall/Library not viable for emergency use. Sadly, the generator wiring was never in place to save money from the onset. Sidewalks: Front apron to road sidewalk is included but actual decision not entirely clear in terms of if they are included in estimates. It appears they are not. J.	2:00:00	2:21:00

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		<p>Banks has previously stated he feels they should be paid for under alternate accounting lines by township (not tied to costs of Hall/Library) even though they are required. At 2:55, in response to a written question from a member of the public, the Clerk confirms that whatever was in the Altered Roots Class C estimate is to be included in next estimate.</p> <p>Stone facing: Direction to remove was provided to architects. Unclear how this will affect appearance.</p> <p>At 2:21:00 Vote on Motion to proceed to 60% estimates with direction to reduce total cost to within \$3M including contingencies; vote carried 5 to 4 with Carr, Dunfield, P. Banks, J. Banks and Hutchings voting in favor.</p>		
Integrity Commissioner Report	There was no finding that Councillor Delaney acted inappropriately whatsoever by the Commissioner.	<p>The mayor asks councillors to speak to each other and to the Commissioner before submitting complaints – they are unbudgeted costs.</p> <p>This was a frivolous complaint against councillor Delaney. Grassroots Group is confident the complaint was from one of four councillors in the “group of 5”. The complainant is trying to use intimidation tactics with councilor Delaney who does not fall in line with their agenda. These complaints can cost up to \$10,000 to review and are paid out of the taxpayer’s pocket.</p>	2:39:40	2:42:18
Questions from the Public	Wendy Alford	<p>CAO confirms it unlikely the Hall Library will qualify for any grants or other funding streams.</p> <p>4th Bay in Firehall may come under question during budget discussions.</p> <p>At 3:06:19 Wendy’s is very complimentary regarding work of the Treasurer and but disturbed that 5 councillors are ignoring the advice.</p>	3:00:00	3:07:00