Financial Planning Committee
Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date of Meeting: **October 22, 2025**
Location: **Electronic Meeting**

Members Present:
Sue Ellen Fast, Bowen Island Municipality (Chair)
Mairead Boland, Saturna Island Local Trust Area (Vice Chair) and Regional Planning Committee Representative
Tobi Elliott, Gabriola Island Local Trust Area, Executive Committee
Judith Gedye, Bowen Island Municipality, Governance Committee Representative
David Graham, Denman Island Local Trust Area
David Maude, Mayne Island Local Trust Area, Executive Committee
Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area, Executive Committee
Tim Peterson, Lasqueti Island Local Trust Area, Executive Committee and Trust Programs Committee Representative
Susan Yates, Gabriola Island Local Trust Area, and Islands Trust Conservancy Board Representative

Staff Present:
Rueben Bronee, Chief Administrative Officer
Julia Mobbs, Director, Financial and Employee Services
Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services
Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services
David Marlor, Director, Legislative and Information Services
Corlynn Strachan, Executive Administrative Assistant/Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fast called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and acknowledged that participants in the meeting were on many Coast Salish territories.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Review of the Agenda

No changes were presented for consideration.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda

By general consent the Committee approved the agenda as presented.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public were present.

4. DELEGATIONS

None.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 Maxine Leichter - 2025-10-01

Received for information.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

6.1 Minutes of Previous Meetings

6.1.1 August 20, 2025 Financial Planning Committee Minutes

By general consent the Committee approved the minutes as presented.

6.2 Resolutions Without Meeting

None.

6.3 Follow up Action List

Director Mobbs advised the two in-progress items, with target dates of November 25th, will be impacted by the BCGEU strike and deliverables will likely be delayed.

Discussion ensued on:

- Item 2 – UBCM Conduct Session: Consideration of creation potential reserve fund for conducting investigations and mediation.
- 18-Sep-2025 Final Item - Processing Planning Applications: Clarifying if this is included in the work program, and how the strike impacting ability to address this issue. Staff are exploring options to increase application fees.

7. BUSINESS - WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

7.1 Introduction to Draft 1, Version 1 of the 2026–2027 Budget

7.1.1 Budget Overview – Briefing

Chief Administrative Officer Bronee spoke on how the current operational review connects with the budget process this year.

Director Mobbs provided briefing on the first draft of the 2026–2027 budget, including a review of the Budget Guidelines Assessment and Funding Request Summary documents.

Discussion ensued on:

- Allocation of the Provincial grant for First Nations Engagement of $150,000, and future reporting on how the money will be spent.
- Providing an estimate of staff time and additional costs required to organize in-person Trust Council meetings compared to virtual meetings.
- Estimating the BCGEU staff wage increases at a full point higher than the current budgeted 2.5%.

- Insurance cost figures on page 9 of the Draft 2026/27 Budget Overview Briefing document are transposed and need to be corrected. The prior year should read $198,940.
- Director Mobbs identified an error in the Local Trust Committee projects table and advised that the figure should be corrected to $153K instead of $306K.

7.1.2 2026/27 Budget Guidelines Assessment

Director Mobbs highlighted the following:

- Prioritization of Geographic Information System (GIS) system work depends on future decisions by the Financial Planning Committee and Trust Council.
- Trust Council's budget guidelines directs that operating budgets with increases will be justified by a business case. The Senior Leadership Team developed a new "Operating Increase Justification Form" to replace the less suitable business case template for this purpose. This has resulted in greater operational detail within the current budget.
- As directed, staff prepared a list of potential budget reductions totaling 2.7%, found on page 33 of the agenda.

Discussion ensued on:

- It was noted that applying a corporate lens to assess increased staffing, and requiring a business case, was a reasonable request; however, it was acknowledged that developing a business case for labour is difficult.
- Appreciation was expressed for the new format used to evaluate new staff requests.
- A question was raised regarding why the Islands Trust, given its mandate to preserve and protect, did not have a biologist on staff earlier.
- With recent grants expiring, efforts are being made to actively pursue new grant opportunities.
- Reference was made to Policy 2.3.1 (Committee Terms of Reference), noting that the committee's purpose is to facilitate Trust Council's participation in the annual budget process and make recommendations on financial management, rather than to focus on cutting the budget.
- There was a comment made that mapping and GIS resources, in the strategic plan project section of the budget guidelines, may have been included prematurely by Trust Council and that Trust Council's overall priorities should guide the process.
- Discussion was held regarding prioritization and sequencing of strategic plan projects. It was noted that certain initiatives, such as the Reconciliation Program and Policy Statement Amendment, are core and ongoing, while others may need to be staged over multiple years. Questions were raised about whether prioritization discussions should occur at the committee level or at the December Trust Council meeting. Consideration was also given to emerging priorities, such as the integration of artificial intelligence, and to aligning project sequencing with available financial resources and the corporate plan.

- It was noted that the projected 33% tax increase for Bowen Island Municipality is significant and raises concern given current economic conditions.
- It was further noted that the organization must balance fixed costs and strategic priorities within limited provincial funding, and that fiscal restraint and careful prioritization will be required.

The Committee recessed from 11:18 a.m. until 11:33 a.m.

Discussion ensued on:

- It was suggested that the Trust Area Resiliency Assessment be deferred from this year's budget due to the project's size and complexity, allowing the next Trust Council to review and consider it before funding is allocated.

7.1.4 Funding Requests

7.1.4.2 Strategic Plan Projects

7.1.4.2.3 Trust Area Resilience Assessment Initiative

Discussion ensued on:

- This being a significant valuable project, reducing the funding amount, the need for this to be a joint project with the Island Trust Conservancy, and that it creates a basic inventory.
- Bowen is using Islands Trust Freshwater mapping directly in the OCP review and that Islands Trust mapping is the source for Bowen.

7.1.4.3 Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) Board Projects

7.1.4.3.1 ITC Five-Year Plan: First Nations Engagement Project

Discussion ensued on:

- If a request should be made to the Minister to fund $200,000 for First Nations engagement in building the legislated five-year plan, given the Minister's direction for this engagement.
- Approval of the five-year plan is a statutory requirement, with a deadline of December 2027.
- A view that the ITC five-year plan should be funded by the ITC not by Islands Trust.
- Advocacy matters typically go through the Executive Committee, and before requesting provincial funding, Trust Council should demonstrate efforts to reallocate internal discretionary funds, as the Minister would expect this for a legislated ITC requirement.
- Asking the ITC Board to see if any of its budget could be funded by a recent large donation.

The Committee recessed at 12:06 p.m. until 12:45 p.m.

7.1.4.4 Local Trust Committee Projects

Discussion ensued on:

- Salt Spring items 7.1.4.4.7 and 7.1.4.4.9 have been funded since April 2023.
- Staff resources and community expectations, and that this is the third consecutive year of limited staff capacity to support LTC projects. These projects are funded through the special reserve fund and do not impact taxation, but they do have implications for staffing.
- Retaining qualified staff on Salt Spring Island is a significant challenge, with limited options to address the issue.
- The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) has not yet reviewed these projects, and draft versions have not been reviewed by the LTCs.
- The need to clarify how much can realistically be accomplished in the next fiscal year given available resources, and that LTC projects are carried out in coordination with consultants.
- If the organizational review will assess office locations and barriers to staff retention.
- The importance of discussing project priorities at Trust Council and drafting a resolution recommending that Official Community Plan (OCP) projects proceed only when sufficient staff resources are available.

Trustee Boland left the meeting at 2:05 p.m. and returned at 2:10 p.m.

The Committee recessed from 2:13 p.m. until 2:24 p.m.

FPC-2025-046
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Financial Planning Committee recommend to Trust Council that:

- Direct staff to restrict approval of new minor projects until staffing levels within the Regional Planning Team are at least 75%,

as per the Planning Services – Projects Feasibility Assessment Briefing dated October 8, 2025.

CARRIED

FPC-2025-047
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Financial Planning Committee recommend to Trust Council that:

- Galiano Island Targeted OCP Review Project business case not be approved for funding,

as per the Planning Services – Projects Feasibility Assessment Briefing dated October 8, 2025.

CARRIED

FPC-2025-048
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Financial Planning Committee request that the Islands Trust Conservancy Board consider putting a portion of its recent $1 million

donation to support some of the Island Trust Conservancy's 2026/27 budget requests as appropriate.

CARRIED

Discussion ensued on the importance of the new term Council meeting in person, holding the June and September Trust Council meetings electronically, and the potential for increased electronic meetings to attract a broader range of candidates.

FPC-2025-049
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Financial Planning Committee recommend to Trust Council that in-person Trust Council meetings in Fiscal Year 2026/27 be reduced from four in-person meetings to two.

CARRIED

7.1.4.5 Operational Projects

7.1.4.5.2 Trustee Laptops - Business Case

Discussion ensued on:

- Many Trustees effectively use their own laptops.
- Given the anticipated significant turnover of Trustees in the next session, whether an allocation of 15 laptops would be sufficient.

7.1.4.5.3 Accessibility Plan Development - Business Case

Director Marlor provided an overview of the business case.

Discussion ensued on:

- This project is not an option for Islands Trust, direction came from the Province, and Islands Trust is behind in this project by one-year.
- The Committee needs to complete an inventory of where there are gaps, assess staff capacity, and create a plan.
- External members of the Accessibility Committee want a robust public feedback process.
- There may be funding opportunities for upgrades once a plan in place.
- Support for Option Two (2) of the Business Case.

7.1.4.5.4 Electronic Document Management Solution- Business Case

Director Marlor provided an overview of the business case.

Discussion ensued on:

- File sharing for trustees, and providing better access in an organized way
- This is basic government work, the backbone of corporate structure, and there are potential risks to data, data integrity, and security.

- The importance of having a robust discussion at Trust Council regarding electronic records management.

7.1.4.6 Staffing Requests

Discussion ensued on

- Not supporting additional staffing due to the current financial climate.
- The need to maintain positions to preserve and protect, and for key functions.
- The importance of prioritizing staffing requests at Trust Council.
- Distinguishing between “nice to have” and “need to have” positions.
- Continuing the Registered Professional Biologist (1.0 FTE), and other roles, as temporary positions rather than permanent positions.

7.1.4.7 Other Funding Request Reports

7.1.4.7.1 ITC Board Budget Request – Briefing

Discussion ensued on:

- Conclusion of the contribution agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada for the species at risk program and the impact to the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) budget.
- Whether or not the 700 staff hours in the First Nations engagement plan are accounted for within the administration percentage. Staff commented that staff hours are included in the salary line item.
- A view that the Board could be requested to consider allocating some of the recent $1 million donation to the ITC Opportunity Fund for land securement and property management, or interest from the donation, to offset taxation, while ensuring that the donor’s intent is honoured and relationships with other conservancies and partners are not jeopardized.
- The proposed increase to the Conservancy budget from taxation influences the projected increase in the Bowen Island Municipality tax levy.

7.1.5 Operating Budgets - Increase Justifications

Discussion ensued on support for the justification documents and the need to add clearer labels, including headings, potentially under department information, to clarify the purpose and context of each document.

8. BUSINESS - OTHER

8.1 Proposed Financial Planning Committee (FPC) Meeting Dates for 2026/2027 - Request for Decision

Discussion ensued on:

- Correcting the October 15, 2026 meeting date from "Wednesday" to "Thursday."
- Concern that the timing of meetings is so close to the election, given that Trustees may be candidates.
- Implications of not holding the October 15th meeting including the lack of an alternative opportunity to review and discuss the budget prior to the circulation of the Trust Council agenda.

FPC-2025-050
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Financial Planning Committee adopt the proposed meeting dates of May 27, 2026, August 19, 2026, October 15, 2026, December 2, 2026, January 27, 2027 and February 17, 2027 for the 2026/27 fiscal year.

CARRIED

FPC-2025-051
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Financial Planning Committee direct staff to schedule all adopted Financial Planning Committee meeting dates as electronic meetings.

CARRIED

9. BUSINESS – NEW

There was no new business.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

11. CLOSED MEETING

None.

12. RISE AND REPORT

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the Committee adjourned the meeting at 3:14 p.m.

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Sue Ellen Fast, Chair

Certified Correct:

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Corlynn Strachan, Executive Administrative Assistant/Recorder