

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
March 24, 2021
Approved Minutes

DATE: March 24, 2021
TIME: 7:00 p.m. – 7:29 p.m.
PLACE: Council Chambers – Public Via Facebook Live

ATTENDANCE: Deputy Mayor Gary Clow; Councillors Derek Smith; Darren MacDougall; Jill Burridge; Steve Gallant; Gail MacDonald; Robert Hughes, CAO; Jeremy Crosby, Deputy CAO, and Director of Infrastructure; Kim O’Connell, Director of Finance and Technology; Wendy Watts, Community and Business Engagement Manager; and Mary McAskill, Recording Clerk

REGRETS: Nil

CHAIR: Mayor Steve Ogden

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Steve Ogden called the Special Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed those viewing via social media.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved, seconded, and carried that the agenda be approved as circulated.

Introduction – Chair of Finance and Technology Committee

Mayor Ogden introduced the Chair of the Finance and Technology Committee Councillor Gail MacDonald, noting that she did a great job, along with the director of finance Kim O’Connell, and the rest of Council who have worked hard to develop the budget.

Mayor Ogden turned the meeting over to Councillor Gail MacDonald who presented the budget highlights for 2021/22. “It is my pleasure to highlight the 2021/22 Town of Stratford budget. This budget is balance by implementing the second phase of last year’s previously announced tax increases. This two year plan was necessary to allow us to balance our budget and was shared among all in Stratford, rather than just by some taxpayers. The increases in most cases maintain a lower or equal rate to those of our closest neighbours in Charlottetown and Cornwall. To the average residential property owner this will mean a less than \$15 tax increase for the upcoming year. I am

pleased to announce there will be no increase in our Stratford Utility charges for the upcoming year.

The Town of Stratford continues to face significant pressure from growth. With growth comes the need to provide additional infrastructure, programming, and services all of which require additional revenue to be able to deliver. While being positioned for growth is exciting for our Town, it requires us to be forward thinking in our planning and forecasting. Growth in the Town is very positive; however, it doesn't directly relate to increased revenue for the Town as services including water and sewer infrastructure, trails and sidewalks, increased recreation and culture programming and fire protection among others, are required in order for the growth to occur and come at an expense that is not equal the growth revenue. We expect that this year will see further growth from both commercial and residential developments, and for this trend to continue for many years to come.

As we look to the next 12 months there are many exciting projects underway in our community. Some of these will be highlighted in more detail on the following pages, but residents will be looking forward to seeing the waterfront space begin to develop; the community campus design and initial servicing begin; the launch of SWITCH Stratford – a residential energy retrofit program; a trail expansion at Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park and much more!

Our community is a great one with many positive things happening around us and of course our biggest asset is our wonderful residents. We are positioned well for the future and together we are truly building the best community possible!

Revenue and Expenses

In the 2021/22 Town budget, we are forecasting revenue of \$7,943,000 which includes government transfers of \$1,334,000 and expenses of \$7,942,200, resulting in a surplus of \$800. The Town of Stratford, through your Town Council and staff, continue to deliver exceptional value for your investment as a resident, with the amount of revenue available to us. Municipalities are limited in the number of sources of revenue available to them and like others, rely primarily on property taxes, Utility charges and fees to pay for services and infrastructure.

The Upcoming budget year includes investments in developing interpretational signage demonstrating the value of natural areas in the community, the continuation of the

popular residential tree planning program, further park development in the Town, as well as additional public art installations.

The past year has seen use of our outdoor space greatly increase and remain high throughout the winter months and include trails, parks, and sidewalks. Many residents have discovered places like Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park for the first time this past year and are now including it as a regular part of their activities. The Town continues to expand our network of trails and connections, including looking at additional partnerships with private landowners who remain responsive to our requests to extend our active transportation networks across their properties. A new active transportation path, subject to pricing, is planned for the waterside of Keppoch Road from Kinlock Road extending east to the Town boundary.

Capital Budget

The budget for the Town of Stratford's 2021/22 capital items is \$7,875,100, which after infrastructure funding and other funding partners in the amount of \$4,372,200, will be a net cost \$3,420,900 to taxpayers. Included in this number is funding for Town capital including \$2,570,000, in New Deal Gas Tax funding, \$670,200 in Investing in Canada funding and \$132,000 in other funding. The Town will use the surplus from 2020/21 to reduce our capital financing.

The Utility capital budget is \$3,259,100 of which the Town will receive infrastructure funding of \$900,000 from the Clean Water Wastewater Fund, \$206,200 from the Municipal Strategic Component funding, and \$1,041,000 from the Investing in Canada Fund for a net capital of \$1,111,900.

Community Campus

The 2021/22 Town of Stratford capital budget includes funding to complete the purchase of the community campus land, as well as the annexation of the portion located outside of the boundary of the Town and the required rezoning of the campus land to Public Service and Institutional (PSI) and the rezoning of the two remainder parcels to Residential R-1. This process is underway and expected to be complete by summer.

The budget also includes funding to complete the development of a Master Plan for the campus property and will include a site plan with elements and amenities laid out in accordance with their relationship to one another, and showing where the roads, water and sewer services, electrical and communication services, stormwater infrastructure,

and active transportation infrastructure will be located, following the natural topography to the extent possible. The plan will also include a phasing scheme to enable the campus to be developed in an orderly fashion, as funding and community needs dictate.

Further decisions on the site development will be made by Council as funding is available, community needs arise and priorities are determined. The property is an investment in our community that will be developed over a period of time to serve the future needs of our residents.

T3 Transit Fleet

The Town of Stratford, along with partners the City of Charlottetown and the Town of Cornwall, is upgrading the aging T3 Transit fleet with new busses to ensure we continue to provide a safe, reliable, and consistent service to the residents. In 2021/22 two 40' and four 35' transit busses and two mini busses will be received. The addition of these busses will allow us to look at expanding service in the future and provide continued consistent service. The mini busses will be a great asset to the system and can be used in pilot program areas, where new routes are being contemplated, or the possible implementation of an on-demand transit area. In addition to the above, the Ready Pass system and upgrades to the Wi-Fi system will be implemented in the coming year.

Waterfront Park

With the Stratford Utility project to pipe the Town's sewer to Charlottetown complete, the Town will soon add the lagoon property to the entrance of our community, and the Town is in the process of planning for the future of this area. The Town of Stratford is completing phase 2 of the consultations, closing on March 29, 2021, to receive feedback from residents on the future of the waterfront area. The current budget includes \$925,000 for initial work at the site to coincide with the decommissioning of the lagoons.

Pedestrian Safety and Active Transportation Investments

Along with the previously announced planned active transportation path along Keppoch Road, the existing Trans Canada Trail network from the Hillsborough Bridge to the underpass connection on Glen Stewart Drive will be paved in the upcoming year. Upgrades to the sidewalks at the Trans Canada Highway, Stratford Road, and Bunbury Road intersection will be made to assist with the movement of increased active transportation users once the new active transportation corridor across the bridge is complete by the Province of PEI.

The Town will make further pedestrian and traffic safety investments, including purchasing additional portable speed humps and speed radar signs, and exploring the option of adding additional permanent speed humps in certain areas.

The Town thanks the Province of PEI for working with us to have rapid flashing crosswalk beacons installed at busy crossing near our schools.

Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park

Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park was created in 2013 with the purchase of 140 acres consisting of a mix of forest, field, stream, and marshland to protect the water supply at the Fullerton's Creek wellfield site. Since then, the property has continued to be developed and will see a further trail expansion in the upcoming year. This past fall, an edible orchard was planted with support from Tree Canada and the Stratford Area Watershed Improvement Group (SAWIG), a red winged blackbird public art installation complete, and a public washroom constructed. The natural playground will open later in 2021.

Other Highlights

- Solar panel installation at the Stratford Emergency Services Centre (subject to funding)
- Energy retrofits at Cotton Centre (subject to funding)
- Establishment of an annual business survey
- Pondside Park parking lot paving
- Funding for the 2023 Canada Games – Stratford athletes and Canada Winter Games
- Funding to enable on-line voting for the 2022 municipal election (Note: Council has not yet made a final decision on this initiative)
- Additional electric vehicle charging stations

Utility Update

The Stratford Utility operates on a cash recovery basis and as such, the Town continually analyzes expenses to ensure that the rates for customers are equitable while being sufficient to meet our long term goals. Recently, the Stratford Utility Corporation and ultimately all residents, reached a milestone as the Town's sewage began successful pumping to the Charlottetown Pollution Control Plant. In 2020, a comprehensive review of water and sewer expenses, as well as a five year projected capital plan was completed and these projections were run through a Utility rate model. For the upcoming budget year, the Town of Stratford's Utility customers will have no increase to their water or

sewer rates. As we have just begun pumping to Charlottetown and will be billed ongoing for all sewage pumped to their plant, it is important for all Stratford Utility users to look for ways to reduce their consumption where possible.

The 2021/22 Utility budget includes \$3,178,800 in revenue, consisting primarily of metered and unmetered Utility customer rates. The expenses are budgeted to be \$3,153,400 resulting in a surplus of \$25,400.

Further budget investments from the Utility budget include upgrades to the Corish sewage lift station and Pondside water station, along with further implementation of the Town's inflow and infiltration and reduction program which saw repairs to more than 50 manholes in the 2020/21 budget year. The work is even more important now that we are pumping our sewage to Charlottetown and will reduce the amount of surface and ground water seeping into the sewer system.

An application to the Investing in Canada infrastructure program for twinning of the water tower, further upgrades to the Corish sewage lift station, and to implement solar power at three water stations will be made. Continued upgrades to the Town's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) communications by converting all remaining sewer pump stations to radio communications will be made this year.

Water Audit Program

The Town of Stratford and SAWIG continue to provide Stratford Utility customers with a free in home water audit. The program aims to teach residents how to read their water meter and check regularly for leaks in their home, to educate residents about how much water they are using and provide homeowners with recommendations on how to reduce their water consumption. While the Covid-19 pandemic reduced the ability to offer the program for part of 2020, we wish to assure residents that the water audit program continues at this time in a safe and compliant manner and encourage all Stratford Utility customers to consider having one completed.

In closing, on behalf of all members of Council, we thank residents for their resilience over the past year. While 2020, and 2021 have thrown many challenges at us this far, we have adjusted, adapted, and responded as needed, and with you and your safety in mind. For many residents and businesses in our community 2021 may remain a challenging year, but as a community, as your Town, we commit to continuing to work hard on your behalf every day and will pivot as or if needed once again. We truly hope that there will be an in-person community gathering before the year is through.

3. APPROVAL OF THE TOWN AND UTILITY BUDGETS AND APPROVAL OF THE UTILITY TARIFF**a) Resolution FT002-2021/22 Adoption of the Town Operating Budget****Moved by Councillor Gail MacDonald****Seconded by Deputy Mayor Clow**

BE IT RESOLVED that the 2021/22 Town of Stratford Operating Budget with revenue of \$7,943,000 and expenses of \$7,942,200 for a surplus of \$800 and a cash flow surplus of \$126,300, be hereby approved in accordance with the following revenue and expense tables:

	Actual 2020	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
Property Tax	\$4,152,661	\$4,702,100	\$5,108,000
CUSA Grant	\$1,197,564	\$1,242,600	\$1,334,000
Salary Recovery	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Rent Income	\$402,914	\$754,800	\$657,200
Police Fines	\$54,574	\$60,000	\$60,000
Fees and Permits	\$132,141	\$172,200	\$151,000
Interest Income	\$20,752	\$100	\$100
Recreation	\$83,853	\$94,500	\$96,100
Other	\$744,310	\$15,300	\$526,600
Total Operating Revenue	\$6,798,769	\$7,051,600	\$7,943,000
Government Grants		\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$6,798,769	\$7,051,600	\$7,943,000

Operating	Actual 2020	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
General Government Expenses	\$2,697,864	\$3,020,400	\$3,616,500

Finance Expenses	\$684,736	\$790,500	\$825,600
Recreation Expenses	\$645,600	\$748,300	\$739,900
Infrastructure Expenses	\$983,044	\$1,231,000	\$1,422,100
Planning Expenses	\$332,534	\$361,300	\$398,100
Depreciation	\$739,093	\$900,000	\$940,000
Total Expenses	\$6,082,871	\$7,051,500	\$7,942,200

Operating	Actual 2020	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
Total Surplus	\$715,898	\$100	\$800
Add: Depreciation	\$739,093	\$900,000	\$940,000
Less: Principal payment	(\$507,413)	(\$656,000)	(\$814,500)
Total Cash Flow Surplus	\$947,578	\$244,100	\$126,300

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that:

- the non-commercial municipal tax rate be set at \$0.45 per \$100 of assessment for 2021
- the non-commercial non-resident municipal tax rate be set at \$0.90 per \$100 of assessment for 2021
- the non-commercial apartment municipal tax rate be set at \$0.66 per \$100 of assessment for 2021
- the non-commercial non-resident apartment municipal tax rate be set at \$1.32 per \$100 of assessment for 2021
- the non-commercial motel municipal tax rate be set at \$0.66 per \$100 of assessment for 2021
- the non-commercial non-resident motel municipal tax rate be set at \$1.32 per \$100 of assessment for 2021
- the commercial municipal tax rate be set at \$1.25 per \$100 of assessment for 2021

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee.

Councillor MacDougall thanked Councillor MacDonald and all who helped put the budget together.

Question: **CARRIED**

b) Resolution FT003-2021/22 Adoption of the 2021/22 Capital Budget and Four Year Capital Plan

Moved by Councillor Gail MacDonald

Seconded by Councillor Derek Smith

WHEREAS as part of the new Municipal Government Act, the Town of Stratford is required to submit a five year capital expenditure plan that includes an asset management program; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the 2021/22 Capital Budget per the following schedules be approved in the amount of \$7,875,100 less New Deal funding of \$2,570,000, less Investing in Canada funding of \$670,200, other funding of \$1,132,000 and a reserve allocation of \$82,000 for a net Town Capital Budget of \$3,420,900.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the attached four year capital plan covering the years 2022/23 to 2025/26 per the following schedules be approved.

Capital	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
Park Development	\$101,000	\$100,000
Recreation Centre Equipment	\$8,000	\$9,000
Recreation Capital Projects	\$255,000	
Sidewalk/Bike Path/Trail Construction	\$1,000,000	\$2,250,000
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	\$40,000	\$40,000
Street Lighting	\$15,000	
Equipment Replacements/Additions	\$8,000	\$105,500
Town Centre Capital Repairs/Additions	\$155,000	\$161,000
Cotton Park Building Repairs/Additions		\$36,800
Other Building/Grounds Repairs/Additions	\$78,300	\$35,000
Emergency Services Facility	\$325,000	\$26,000
Public Art	\$15,000	\$15,000
Computer Hardware	\$25,000	\$17,500
Solar on Town Buildings		\$413,300
Waterfront Park	\$1,000,000	\$925,000
Community Campus Land		\$2,470,000

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Community Campus Site Design	100,000	280,000
Transit	\$94,000	\$95,000
Traffic Calming	\$6,200	\$25,000
Kelly's Pond Watershed Restoration	\$300,000	\$315,000
Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park	\$242,400	\$58,000
Maintenance Building		\$498,000
Shore Access	\$500,000	
Stratford Honour Roll Project - Heritage	\$50,000	
Total Capital Expenses	\$4,317,900	\$7,875,100

Capital Funding	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
New Deal Funding	\$1,022,000	\$2,570,000
CWWF Funding		
Canada 150 Fund		
Investing in Canada	\$1,206,100	\$670,200
TIE sidewalk/bikeline Partnership	\$500,000	\$1,050,000
Other Grants	\$560,000	\$82,000
Total Capital Funding	\$3,288,100	\$4,372,200
Reserve Allocation		\$82,000

Net Capital Expenditure	\$1,029,800	\$3,420,900
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Four Year Capital Plan

Capital	Budget 2022/ 23	Budget 2023/ 24	Budget 2024/ 25	Budget 2025/ 26
Other Building/Grounds Repairs/Additions	\$ 113,000	\$ 50,000.00		
Recreation Equipment	\$ 39,500	\$ 113,000.00	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Traffic Calming	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000.00	25,000	25,000
Street Lighting	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000.00	15,000	15,000
Lights on Robert Cotton Trail	\$ 200,000			
Signage	\$ 5,000			
Active Transportation Path Construction/Sidewalk	\$ 350,000	\$ 350,000	350,000	350,000
Park Development	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	100,000	100,000
Public Art	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Waterfront Park & Connecting Trails (TBD)				
Computer Replacement	\$ 32,500	\$ 17,500	17,500	17,500
Equipment Replacements	\$ 50,000			
Transit	\$ 95,000	\$ 102,200		
Kelly's Pond Watershed Restoration				
Town Centres Additions/Replacements	\$ 310,000	\$ 50,000	50,000	50,000
Shore Access		\$ 525,000		
Community School Campus	\$ 5,050,000	\$ 5,000,000		
Total Capital Expenses	\$ 6,400,000	\$ 6,362,700	\$ 580,500	\$ 580,500
Capital Funding	Budget 2022/ 23	Budget 2023/ 24	Budget 2024/ 25	Budget 2025/ 26
Investing in Canada	\$ 3,665,000	\$ 4,179,500		
New Deal Funding	\$ 350,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 320,000	
Other Funding				
Total Capital Funding	\$ 4,015,000	\$ 4,529,500	\$ 320,000	\$ -
Net Capital Expenditure	\$ 2,385,000	\$ 1,833,200	\$ 260,500	\$ 580,500

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee.

Question: **CARRIED**

c) Resolution FT004-2021/22 Adoption of the Utility Operating Budget

Moved by Councillor Gail MacDonald

Seconded by Councillor Darren MacDougall

BE IT RESOLVED that the attached 2021/22 Stratford Utility Corporation operating budget with revenues of \$3,178,800, and expenses of \$3,153,400 for a surplus of \$25,400 be approved as follows:

Revenue	Actual 2020	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
Unmetered Sales Sewer	\$298,014	\$307,900	\$295,000
Unmetered Sales Water	\$70,492	\$73,600	\$64,700
Metered Sales Sewer	\$1,397,046	\$1,481,600	\$1,592,200
Metered Sales Water	\$902,734	\$1,000,700	\$1,089,700
Frontage Charges Sewer	\$28,550	\$40,000	\$28,200
Frontage Charges Water	\$8,037	\$17,800	\$7,500
Penalty Charges/Late Fees	-\$1,295	\$36,000	\$36,000
Connection Fees	\$5,595	\$7,000	\$5,000
Interest Income	\$3,783	\$1,000	\$2,500
Other Income	\$41,766	\$31,000	\$58,000
Donated Capital	\$146,125		
Total Operating Revenue	\$2,900,847	\$2,996,600	\$3,178,800
Government Grants	\$2,940,211	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$5,841,058	\$2,996,600	\$3,178,800
Total Expenses	\$2,517,050	\$2,996,200	\$3,153,400

Total Surplus	\$3,324,008	\$400	\$25,400
Less: Donated Capital	(\$146,125)	\$0	\$0
Less: Government Transfers	(\$2,940,211)		\$0
Add: Depreciation	\$999,471	\$1,033,000	\$1,035,000
Less: Principal payments	(\$674,312)	(\$678,000)	(\$742,000)
Total Cash Flow Surplus	\$562,831	\$355,400	\$318,400

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee.

Mayor Ogden stated that he was pleased there were no increase to the rates in this budget.

Question: **CARRIED**

a) Resolution FT005-2021/22 Adoption of the Utility Capital Budget and Four Year Capital Plan

Moved by Councillor Gail MacDonald

Seconded by Councillor Steve Gallant

WHEREAS as part of the new Municipal Government Act the Town of Stratford is required to submit a five year capital expenditure plan that includes an asset management program; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the following tables for the 2021/22 Utility Capital Budget be approved in the amount of \$3,259,100 less Investing in Canada funding of \$1,041,000, CWWF –Clean Water and Waste Water funding of \$900,000 and Municipal Strategic Component funding of \$206,200 for a net Capital expenditure of \$1,111,900.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following table for the four year capital plan be approved covering the years 2022/23 to 2025/26.

Capital	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
Misc Capital Items	\$28,500	\$176,000
Water and Sewer Extensions	\$1,410,000	\$1,418,300
Replace Treatment Plant	\$6,425,000	\$1,200,000
Inflow Infiltration Study Recommendations	\$100,000	\$100,000
Solar Array Water Stations	\$94,600	\$118,300
SCADA Upgrades		\$236,500
Metering	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total Capital Expenses	\$8,068,100	\$3,259,100
Capital Funding	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22
CWWF Funding	\$4,818,800	\$900,000
MSC Funding		\$206,200
Investing in Canada	\$1,102,900	\$1,041,000
Green Fund		

Total Capital Funding	\$5,921,700	\$2,147,200
Net Capital Expenditure	\$2,146,400	\$1,111,900
*** projects not completed in 2020/21 and re-budgeted in 2021/22.		

Four Year Capital Plan

Capital	Budget 2022/23	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25	Budget 2025/26
Misc Capital Items	\$37,000	\$102,000	\$26,000	\$22,000
Water and Sewer Extensions	\$3,523,900	\$5,370,800	\$5,024,100	\$6,612,500
Inflow Infiltration Recommendations	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Solar Array Water Stations	\$1,217,600			
Total Capital Expenses	\$4,878,500	\$5,572,800	\$ 5,150,100	\$6,734,500
Capital Funding	Budget 2022/23	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25	Budget 2025/26
Investing in Canada	\$3,475,500	\$3,936,800	\$3,682,700	\$4,847,000
Total Capital Funding	\$3,475,500	\$3,936,800	\$3,682,700	\$4,847,000
Net Capital Expenditure	\$1,403,000	\$636,000	\$1,467,400	\$1,887,500

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee.

Question: **CARRIED**

b) Resolution FT006-2021 - Approval of the 2021 Utility Tariff

Moved by Councillor Gail MacDonald

Seconded by Councillor Jill Burrige

WHEREAS a comprehensive review of water and sewer expenses, as well as a projected 5 year capital plan was completed in 2020; and

WHEREAS these projections were analyzed through utility rate models to determine the rates for the water and sewer rate payers.

BE IT RESOLVED that the attached Stratford Utility tariff for 2021, which incorporates the following, be hereby approved:

- the water for a single family dwelling (SFD) will remain at \$82.05 per quarter as of April 2021;
- The sewer for a single family dwelling (SFD) will remain at \$122.86 per Quarter as of April 2021;
- the consumption charge for metered water will remain at \$0.9680 per cubic meter as of April 2021; and
- the consumption charge for metered sewer will remain at \$1.4530 per cubic meter as of April 2021.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology.

Mayor Ogden commended Council and staff on the preparation of the budget adding that he felt it was an excellent budget. He felt it important that residents know we have a very limited budget, as fire protection has gone up significantly over the past few years, and a number of our other costs have gone up as well. However, we will undertake to do as much as possible, and we will continue to look for opportunities to save money. We will also look at best practices in terms of fiscal management to ensure we are making the best use of the money.

Question: **CARRIED**

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.