STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 267
Councillor Gerbasi indicated that as part of the Operating Budget process there was usually a target given to the staff for reductions or efficiencies and asked the Chair to clarify if there was a target or guideline given and if he agreed with the process.

Councillor Fielding stated that the budget process generally started with the proposed budget for the next year. He stated that Council tabled a three-year operating budget, with an actual budget for the first year and the forecasts for the next two years. He advised that they looked at efficiencies to save taxpayers' dollars and there were times when they looked to enhance services, a good example was some of the community club funding put forward for Capital and Operating. There was enhancement for snow clearing and a number of different enhancements made throughout the year. He further indicated that the budget would be tabled next Tuesday and that those decisions would come forward at budget time.

Councillor Gerbasi asked if the Chair categorically denied that a five percent target reduction was given to staff in the budget process as the Executive Policy Committee went through it.

Councillor Fielding stated that the budget was being tabled on Tuesday and that was when the Departments would reveal their spending plans. He added that budget consultation sessions occurred and when the document was tabled the decisions would be unveiled at that point.

Councillor Gerbasi stated her question had not yet been answered and questioned if the Administration was given a five percent cut target.

Councillor Fielding advised that since the current Mayor and Executive Policy established the budget process two and a half years ago, they had held about seven public consultation sessions and had a blog set up through the Finance Department. He added that part of any budget process included a review of revenue and operations and decisions would be made once the budget was tabled.