



Staff Report

Finance

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: February 24, 2025
Report Number: CFS.25.007
Title: 2025 Draft Budget – Public Comments and Follow Up Items
Prepared by: Mike Switzer, Manager of Budgets & Accounting/Deputy Treasurer,
Monica Quinlan, Director of Corporate & Financial Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CFS.25.007, entitled “2025 Draft Budget – Public Comments and Follow Up Items” for information purposes;

AND THAT Council set the remuneration for the Police Services Board to \$150 per meeting plus \$75 per meeting for preparation time for the Provincial and Public Appointees;

AND THAT, considering current funding restrictions within the 2025 Draft Budget, Council direct staff to cancel the 2025 Budget Pitch Day.

B. Overview

This report outlines the comments from the Public Meeting for the 2025 Draft Budget, which was held on February 18th, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., as well as Staff’s response to these comments.

C. Background

Public Comments

The 2025 Draft Budget has been reviewed by Council and the Public over a series of meetings throughout 2025. On February 18th, 2025, the Town held a Public Meeting to provide the public with the opportunity to review and comment on the 2025 Draft Budget and 2025 Draft Water and Wastewater Budget.

The timeline, as presented to Council, is to bring forward a By-law to adopt the estimates of all sums required for 2025 on March 10th, 2025, for Council’s consideration.

The Town received sixteen written comments and five verbal comments up to 9:00 a.m. February 14, 2025, in advance of the Public Meeting (Attachment 1), one comment after the

deadline prior to the Public Meeting (Attachment 2) and two verbal comments at the Public Meeting.

Budget Pitch Day

On June 24, 2024, Council directed staff to proceed with scheduling a Budget Pitch Day as part of the 2025 budget process. At the January 14, 2025 budget meeting Council directed the 2025 Proposed Base Operating Budget be revised to delay the Grants and Donations matching to 2026. As these funds were intended to be allocated to the budget pitch day requests Council reconsidered the June 24, 2024 Council resolution.

The 2025 Draft Budget does not include funding set aside for Budget Pitch Day pitches and therefore Staff seek Council direction to cancel the scheduling of a Budget Pitch Day for the 2025 Budget.

D. Analysis

A summary of the written and verbal comments that were received by the public prior to the 9:00 a.m. February 14th, 2025, deadline along with staffs' responses can be found in Attachment 1.

Verbal comments received at the Public Meeting held on February 18th, 2025

1) Christine Laskoski (Lasky) – Reconstruction of Peel Street

Christine Laskoski (Lasky) first had a question asking if in the 2025 Budget the Thornbury West Budget Reconstruction is for the Reconstruction of Peel Street? Ms. Laskoski (Lasky) assumes so and underscores the importance of this reconstruction continuing due to it being a liability waiting for a lawsuit. It needs to be safe for residents, cyclists, cars and stresses that this budget should not be delayed again.

Staff Response:

The Thornbury West Budget Reconstruction line item in the 2025 Draft Capital Budget is not for the Reconstruction of Peel Street. The Peel Street North Reconstruction is a separate capital project and line item in the 2025 Capital Budget. Staff do not anticipate the reconstruction of Peel Street North being delayed further. Engineering design is nearing completion and staff expect to tender the project in March of 2025 with construction commencing mid-April 2025.

2) Pamela Spence – Growth Management Specialist

Ms. Spence started her comment by thanking Council and staff for the work to support the request of the very volunteer-oriented group named Craigleith Community Working Group. Ms. Spence is encouraging Council and staff to consider adopting additional funds for the improvement of the streetlights as outlined in Mr. Grangers presentation.

Ms. Spence continued with stating that as a former member of the Sustainability Committee as well as an active participant in the Economic Advisory Group and the Housing Strategy Working Group, to ask for the approval of the request for the position of the Growth Management Specialist. Ms. Spence outlines the importance of this position as a critical leadership position needed in this community. With the development of the Corporate Strategic Plan, and various other plans, this position will be a driver of the priorities within those plans. This role also needs to listen to the taxpayers and residents and take their voice to staff and Council to produce and integrate plans that we have and deliver on the needs of the community.

Staff Response:

Staff have been working with the Craigleith Community Working Group to address their 2025 budget considerations. A separate staff report will be presented to Council with recommendations for Council consideration.

The Growth Management Specialist position is currently on hold as the Town assesses and gathers more detailed information about the specific responsibilities and outcomes expected from this role. During the budget process, the timing and prioritization of certain positions and initiatives are deferred. This deferral is essential to maintain a balance between service delivery and cost control.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders.

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

N/A

G. Financial Impacts

The Town's 2025 Draft Budget has a municipal tax rate increase of 6.15% over 2024 which equates to an additional \$130 annually for the average assessed home of \$530,000 for the Town's portion of the municipal taxes.

Should Council increase the Police Service Board member remuneration per the recommendation in this report the revised municipal tax rate increase will be 6.17% over 2024 or an increase of \$131 annually on a median assessed home of \$530,000.

H. In Consultation With

Senior Management Team

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of a Public Meeting which took place on February 18th, 2025. Those who provided comments at the Public Meeting, including anyone who has asked to receive notice regarding this matter, has been provided notice of this Staff Report.

Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Monica Quinlan, Director of Corporate & Financial Services directorfit@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. Public Comments received prior to the 9:00 a.m. February 14th, 2025 deadline along with Staffs Reponses
2. Public Comments received after the deadline.
3. Remuneration of OPP Detachment/Police Services Board Members – Comparator Municipalities

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Quinlan
Director of Corporate & Financial Services

For more information, please contact:
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