



Township of Drummond/North Elmsley
#19 Special Committee of the Whole Meeting
November 1, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.
Municipal Office, Council Chambers

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES

The Committee of the Whole met on Friday, November 1, 2024 at the Township of Drummond/North Elmsley Administrative Building, 310 Port Elmsley Rd.

ATTENDANCE

Council Present: Reeve Steve Fournier
Chair, Deputy Reeve John Matheson
Councillor Paul Kehoe
Councillor Paul Coutts
Councillor, Ray Scissons

Staff: Cathy Ryder, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk
Janie Laidlaw, Deputy Clerk
Angela Millar, Treasurer
Brady McGlade, Planner
Pete Echlin, Chief Building Official
Clint Bron, Public Works Manager
Laura Code, Public Works Coordinator
Shawn James, Public Works Supervisor

Absent: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. A quorum was present.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

The Chair invited members wishing to declare a pecuniary interest to do so now. No members declared a pecuniary interest.

3 Approval of Agenda

MOTION #COW-24-146

MOVED BY: Paul Coutts
SECONDED BY: Steve Fournier

THAT the Committee of the Whole approves the agenda for the November 1, 2024 meeting of the Committee of the Whole, as circulated.

ADOPTED

4. 2025 Draft Budget

4.1 2025 Budget – Opening Remarks.

The Chair gave opening remarks and turned the meeting over to the Treasurer to present the Draft 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets.

4.2 2025 Draft Budget Overview.

The Treasurer provided an overview of the 2025 Draft Operating and Capital Budget.

The Treasurer explained that the 2025 draft budget proposes a 8.9% tax rate increase which equates to an increase of \$114 on a residential assessment of \$300,000 over 2024.

Policing increases, inflation, payroll increases, reduced Provincial Offence revenue and bridge loan repayment are impacting the 2025 Draft budget.

4.3 2025 Draft Operating Budget.

The Treasurer presented the PowerPoint presentation that was attached to the agenda.

The Reeve explained that a salary compensation review determined what was being budgeted for salaries. The increase due to salaries is being offset by some reserves. Would like the presentation at the public meeting to show that as Council made that decision.

The Treasurer will itemize the salary increase to show the amounts and what is going on the levy and what is paid by reserves and what the other pressures on the tax levy make up the increase.

The Treasurer explained that the average payroll increase is annually budgeted at approximately \$100,000 and this year the increase was \$133,335 and the remaining amount of the salary increase is coming from the working reserve.

It was explained that the cost of living for 2025 applies to Council as stated in the remuneration By-Law. The Reeve explained that the County is using 1.9% cost of living from Statistics Canada and not 3.5% and asked what the difference is by reducing 3.5% COLA to 1.9%. The Treasurer will get that information and explained that the new salary grid that was approved by Council shows a 3.5% for the 2025 COLA. A member thought the County might not be referencing the same statistic for the annual COLA increase.

The Committee reviewed the operating budget in detail. The Treasurer explained the increases and decreases that impact the levy requirement.

The Policing increases are being looked at by the Eastern Ontario Warden Caucus and will be taking the issue to the province as every municipality that is serviced by the OPP is facing large increases for the 2025 budget.

The Bridge repayment loan will be on the levy this year, previous years it has been paid from Development Charges Reserves.

The Fire Department budget has not been presented to the Fire Board, but the estimated preliminary increase is justified by the same type of financial pressures that the township is facing, they are using some reserves to offset salary and other increases. Since the draft budget was prepared the fire department found a \$5,072 reduction in their draft budget.

The Township's portion of the Lanark County Police Services Board is new and is mandated by the Province.

A member discussed some of the stop signs on some of the intersections that used to be yield signs. Public Works will look into the signs and the new traffic standards.

Provincial Offences Act revenue has decreased. The Treasurer explained that due to a backlog in the courts, most charges were dismissed and as a result, the revenue to municipalities has decreased. The CAO confirmed the same happened with By-Law Enforcement fines for Animal Control, the fines are being dismissed at Court. A member asked about the ones that are paid out of court as not every fine goes through the courts. It was discussed that maybe tickets are not being issued as much due to the backlog? The Treasurer will ask more questions to the Town of Perth about the process.

A member would like staff to look into the Landfill Monitoring Contract, he explained that it should not cost as much as is budgeted. A member proposed to reduce the wild parsnip spraying amount from \$29,000 and only do half the spraying in 2024 and the other half in 2025. There was discussion on the application label for the herbicide as to whether areas can be sprayed for two years in a row. Staff will get clarification and explained that the Wild Parsnip procedure was to take inventory in 2024 for spraying in 2025.

Committee agreed to leave the amount as budgeted.

The Committee recessed at 10:14 a.m.

The Committee returned to session at 10:28 a.m.

The Chair asked members to express what percentage of a rate increase they were comfortable with, and some were good with an 8.9% as they felt \$114 on a \$300,00 assessment over the year was not too bad considering a large portion is for policing and out of Council control and some would be okay if it was under 8%.

4.4 2025 Items for Council Consideration.

The Committee reviewed the new items for consideration.

Additional funds to Reserves

OMPF fund Allocation – the Township was just notified that it will receive an extra \$33,200 over last year that was not in the draft budget and is typically taken off the tax levy. Combined with a reduction in the draft Fire Budget that was found as of the draft being done reduces the impact to 8.2% or approximately \$104 on a \$300,000 residential assessment.

Education and County levy – the Education levy was just received and is remaining the same for 2025.

OCIF Allocation – have not been received yet.

Library – the Library increase is partially attributed for additional staff hours for the Library Specialist. This is the second year for this ask. Last year both Drummond/North Elmsley and Tay Valley Township did not support the increase, and it appears that Tay Valley Township maybe considering the increase this year. Councillor Coutts explained that in the last year he has seen how things are operating at the library and can see the need for additional staff hours. The Committee agreed to include it in the budget.

Fire Budget - the draft was reduced by \$5,072 and will the Fire Board will review the budget on November 14.

Community Donations Request - to be reviewed further on the agenda.

Two Summer Students – staff explained that grants would be applied for to try to get funding. Council agreed to include to include it in the budget.

Financing for the Ferguson's Falls Community Hall – a staff report will be coming to Council.

Capital – will be discussed further on the agenda.

Perth Recreation Agreement – pending

2026 Waste Collection Costs – anticipated increase due to changes in recycling programs.

Building and Septic – budgets are now combined; revenues will be shown separately.

4.5 Community Donation Requests.

The following 2025 Community Donations were approved:

Organization	2025 Allocation
Perth Smiths Falls Hospital Foundation	\$20,000
Carlton Place Hospital	\$ 1,000
YAK	\$ 3,000
The Table Community Food Centre	\$ 1,000
Big Brothers & Big Sisters	\$ 1,000
Lanark & District Museum	\$ 500
Community Justice	\$ 2,000
LAWS	\$ 2,000
Perth and District Sports Hall of Fame	\$ 350
Big Rideau Lakes Association	\$ 1,000
Mississippi Lake Association	\$ 1,000
Otty Lake Association	\$ 1,000
Friends of the Tay River Membership	\$ 25

4.6 2025 Draft Capital Budget.

The Committee reviewed the Capital Budget in detail.

The 10 Year Capital Plan will be a separate report to Council in the new year.

170,000 – Design and Engineering

The Committee agreed to keep the budgeted amount for road design and engineering and discussed what roads may not need a design and engineering as they are former Ministry of Transportation Roads.

The Treasurer explained that the Canada Community Building Fund (Federal Gas Tax) has a healthy reserve if needed to complete a road project that is identified in the 10 year capital plan.

\$25,000 – Cul-de-sacs – Minor Road Upgrades

The Committee discussed removing this from the capital budget and to reduce the amount paid back to reserves by \$25,000. It was explained that any repair to a cul-de-sac would have to come back to Council for authorization.

It was agreed to not include this in the 2025 capital budget and to reduce the amount in the Operating Budget to be paid back to reserves.

\$140,000 – Spot Paving & Crack Sealing

The Committee discussed the increase and that it is being funded from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund. The increase was approved.

The Committee discussed roads that were identified in the Road Needs Study that were risks. It was explained that those roads should be addressed in the 10 Year Capital Plan to ensure they are dealt with. The Reeve discussed that a portion of Spence and Richardson Side Road will be done by the County and will find out what that portion is.

\$50,000 - Water Tank

It was explained that the old water tank does not fit in the new truck.

The Committee discussed keeping the current truck for another year and use the old water tank. A member also mentioned that the Fire Department will be replacing a tanker truck in two years and there may be a possibility to purchase it.

It was agreed to not include this in the 2025 capital budget and to reduce the amount in the Operating Budget to be paid back to reserves.

\$30,000 - Streetlights

The Committee discussed that there are complaints about areas that have them and areas that do not. The cost for the layouts is unknown until submitted and vary widely. The Committee agreed to reduce the amount for Streetlights to \$10,000 and leave the replacement to reserves of \$3,000.

The Treasurer reported that with the OMPF increase, the reduction in the draft Fire Department, small increase in the estimate for the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority budget and the reduction in repayment to the reserves for capital, the residential tax rate has gone from 8.9% to 6.9% or from \$114.15 on a \$300,000 residential assessment to \$87.43

4.7 2025 Reserves Summary

The Committee reviewed the information on the status of the reserves. The \$846,470 amount to be transferred to reserves from the operating budget has been reduced by \$75,000. The Treasurer explained that by not spending money from the reserves, she is comfortable to reduce the amount being paid back into reserves.

A report will come back to Council on a loan for the Ferguson's Falls Community Hall with options for Council consideration.

The Canada Community Building Fund (Federal Gas Tax) will have \$675,353 if it not spent on any project in 2025.

The Committee recessed at 12:15 p.m.
The Committee returned to session at 12:45 p.m.

4.8 Proposed Fee Amendments

The Committee discussed the Hall Rental fees as proposed by staff. It was agreed to increase the Drummond Hall rental fees as follows:

Full Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Non-Resident	\$75	\$100
Resident	\$40	\$50
Half Day		
Non-Resident	\$50	\$75
Resident	\$25	\$50

It was agreed to increase the Ferguson's Falls Community Hall rental fees as follows

Full Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Resident	\$50 + \$75 deposit	\$150 + \$75 deposit
Half Day		
Resident	\$25 + \$50 deposit	\$75 + \$75 deposit

The Treasurer explain the proposed reduction on the Waste levy. The Township currently collects recycling but is being refunded by the province. There is now a reserve of that money in a Waste Stabilization Fund. There is an option to reduce the amount for 2025. The Committee is aware that the cost of waste collection will increase and in 2026 that repayment for recycling collection will end when the province implements the recycling collection and decided to leave the Waste levy at \$210 rather than have it reduced in 2025 and possibly increase again in 2026.

Councillor Kehoe left at 1:01 p.m.

A member poised a scenario for a new home building permit and verified that it would increase by \$100 with the new fees for Building.

The Committee agreed with the proposed fee amendments to be brought forward at the public meeting on November 26, 2025.

4.9 Next Steps.

A Public meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, November 26, 2024 and the intent is to bring a By-Law to Council on December 10th, 2024.

5. Adjournment

MOTION #COW-24-146

MOVED BY: Ray Scissons

SECONDED BY: Paul Coutts

THAT the Committee of the Whole stand adjourned at 1:21 p.m.

ADOPTED

John Matheson, Chair

Janie Laidlaw, Deputy Clerk