



Staff Report to Council - for Direction

Title: 2025-2029 Operating and Capital Budget Follow-up

From: Sam Dinsmore, Director of Corporate Services

Date: November 7, 2024

Report Number: CS-2024-041

Staff Recommendation:

That Council direct staff to bring forward the Budget By-law to the January 9, 2025, Council meeting;

That Council direct staff to set the 2025 tax levy increase to 6.53%.

Report Summary:

At the October 10, 2024, Council meeting staff presented the 2025 to 2029 Operating and Capital Budget ([Budget | Bruce County](#)). The budget, at that time had a 6.81% increase to the tax levy over 2024. The 6.81% is broken down into 4.04% maintaining services and assets and 2.77% to fund new initiatives.

Staff are recommending that the 2025 budget by-law be brought forward to the January 9, 2025, Council meeting based on the updated numbers with any revisions as directed by Council.

Background/Analysis:

Staff are recommending the below adjustments to a few of the new initiatives that were included as tax levy funded in the original budget proposal as a result of additional funding information and feedback received from County Council in the previous meeting:

- The Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) funding allocation for 2025 has been released by the province and is \$377,068 more than the amount included in the 2025 budget. As a result, this Provincial revenue has been increased and assigned to the Bruce Road 19 project, and transfers from Reserves in the capital budget have been reduced by an equivalent amount to maintain the county's 2.5% levy contribution increase under the Asset Management Plan recommendation.
- Emergency Shelter Spending - \$100,000 revised to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve. The use of this funding is wholly reliant on what the province does and therefore staff are recommending the change in funding to be from a reserve.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Consultant - \$30,000 revised to be funded from the Human Resources Departmental Reserve. This reserve has the balance at which it can fully fund this one-time cost.

- Archaeological Management Plan Implementation - \$10,000 revised to be funded from departmental reserves following notification that additional provincial funding is being made available for another project previously funded by reserves.
- Road Authority Assessment Study - \$50,000 to be covered by departmental reserves as additional OCIF funding will be available in future years to pay for other work the department had been reserving funds for.
- Paramedic Station Development Charges - the development charges revenues and reserve transfers have been updated to properly reflect the council approval required to implement the use of development charges to partially fund the loan payments. There is no impact to the levy request for this revision.

Factoring in these adjustments reduced the overall tax levy increase from 6.81% down to 6.53%, split 4.04% maintaining services and assets and 2.49% to fund new initiatives. This would decrease the \$82 annual impact on the average assessed house in the County down to \$79.

2025 Budget Adjustments (attachment #1) includes a full list of all additional FTEs as requested in the 2025 budget as well as a detailed list of the initiatives making up the 2.49% increase on the tax levy. Please note that the costs included for the additional FTEs includes both salaries and benefits for the positions.

Other Items

Council requested information and updates on other items through the budget presentation, the list below provides these updates:

- Development Charge Collections - as of September 30th the County has collected \$323,705 in Development Charges. Please note that staff are waiting on a few months of collections from some lower-tiers. At this amount the County would be responsible for “topping -up” the Development Charges by \$829,000 to cover the phase-in discount for 2024 year-to-date.
- Health Care Reserve Fund - included in the 2025 budget is \$225,000 to be transferred into the Health Care Reserve Fund. This represents a \$75,000 increase over the \$150,000 that was transferred into the reserve fund in 2024. This reserve fund is responsible for the five-year commitment to Brightshores of \$500,000. If maintained, at \$150,000 annually, the 2024 contribution level would be sufficient to cover the Brightshores commitment over the remaining four years but would leave little remaining funds to address any other requests received by the County for Health Care related funding.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

The revised 2025 operating and capital budget for the County now includes a 6.53% increase over 2024 which equates to an additional \$79 for the average household.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Senior Management Team

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Growth and Innovation - Strengthen County's use of technology and innovative initiatives

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

Culture and Capacity - Ensure a positive, inclusive and accountable work culture

Culture and Capacity - Be an employer of choice

Environment and Climate Change - Build capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

The operating and capital budgets rely on the recommendation and action plans that are included in the various departmental plans and studies; this includes but is not limited to the County's Asset Management Plan, department-specific service/deployment reviews, Indigenous Reconciliation Framework, Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan, and the Development Charges Background Study.

Departmental Approval:

Sam Dinsmore, Director of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission:

Sean Morphy, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Attachment #1: 2025 Budget Adjustments