



Bruce County Council Minutes

Date: October 10, 2024

Location: Council Chambers

County Administration Centre, Walkerton

Present	Luke Charbonneau, Deputy Warden (Chair)	Jay Kirkland, Councillor Milt McIver, Councillor
	Kenneth Craig, Councillor	Don Murray, Councillor
	Mark Goetz, Councillor	Kym Hutcheon, Alternate Councillor
	Steve Hammell, Councillor	
Regrets	Chris Peabody, Warden	
Staff	Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer	Adam Stanley, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services
	Sean Morphy, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer	Aaron Stauch, Director of Government Relations
	Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development	Jack Van Dorp, Director of Planning and Development
	Megan Garland, Director of Long- Term Care and Senior Services	Linda White, Clerk
	Cathy McGirr, Director of Museum & Cultural Services	Sam Dinsmore, Director of Corporate Services
	Brooke McLean, Director of Library Services	Angela Pilgrim, Financial Analyst
	Tina Metcalfe, Director of Human Services	Ryan Whitmore, Lead Systems Support Analyst
	Jenn Robinson, Director of Human Resources	Lynn Hatten, Deputy Clerk
	Steve Schaus, Director and Chief of Paramedic Services	Fallon Weber, Financial Analyst
		Julie Ireland, Deputy Clerk

1. Call to Order

The meeting of Bruce County Council was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

The minutes were recorded by the Deputy Clerk.

2. Additions, Deletions, Amendments to Agenda

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

4. Public Notice

5. Announcements

6. Adoption of Minutes

7. Public Meeting

8. Delegations

9. Reports - for Information

The following report was received for information:

a. 2025 - 2029 Operating and Capital Budget

Deputy Warden Luke Charbonneau welcomed members of Council and staff to the 2024 Budget presentation meeting and provided opening remarks, noting that the format for the 2025 budget presentation is new, and was developed to align the work of the organization in each department to the Strategic Plan and other foundational documents like the Indigenous Reconciliation Framework and other plans approved by Council. The detailed budget documents are included as appendices to the presentation.

The Deputy Warden noted that the purpose of the budget presentation is to receive the draft budget from staff, and any additional information requested will be brought back to the November 7 meeting when the budget will be considered for approval.

Christine MacDonald, CAO, provided introductory comments to the 2025 budget presentation, emphasizing that the budget focuses on delivering on the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan, specifically:

- maintaining current service levels;
- delivering on council-approved increases to services;

- ensuring the appropriate staff levels to deliver on both of those goals;
- balancing the use and funding of reserves;
- finding efficiencies; and
- flattening the long-term levy increase.

Sam Dinsmore, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, outlined the categories of items that staff have identified as creating pressure on the County's budgeting processes as:

- adjustment to base;
- maintaining services;
- one-time items;
- Council priorities;
- Provincially legislated programs and priorities;
- growth and the cost of growth;
- service initiatives and savings; and
- the operating impact of capital projects.

Lynn Hatten, Deputy Treasurer, outlined the introduction of a corporate-wide strategy around facility reserves that is being implemented to try and reduce the reliance on external debt and smooth the levy increase impacts over the projected period. It was noted that the changes to reserves for facilities are reflective of changes adopted in the Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy earlier this year, as well as changes to how facilities are being managed corporately. Separate facility reserves will be maintained for departments, but staff will look at facility reserves holistically when looking at things like project deferral, in order to ensure funds are available to complete the highest priority work. This may mean that, on a temporary basis, one department's facility reserve is borrowing from another department's, within the parameters and requirements outlined in the policy.

Christine MacDonald noted that the annual inclusion of a 2.5% increase of the levy to be added to the reserves for capital asset replacement that is included in the budget is based on the previous approval and endorsement by Council of the capital asset management plan.

Sam Dinsmore provided an overview of the 2025 Operating Budget. The increase proposed to the operating budget is just over \$15 million, and the two biggest drivers of that increase is cost-of-living increases for salaries and benefits, and higher grants for children's services driven by Provincial funding. Staff are projecting a net levy increase in the operating budget, based on the projected revenues and expenses, of just over \$3.5 million.

In terms of the 2025 Capital Budget, expenditures of approximately \$13 million dollars and revenues of \$10.9 million would result in a net levy increase in the capital budget of just over \$2.0 million.

Based on the proposed budget, staff presented projections related to capital project planning including long-term capital planning; annual repayment limits and capacity; annual debt payments; outstanding debt; and the impact of phasing in Development Charges over the next several years.

Overall, the proposed budget for operating and capital expenses proposed a 6.81% total levy increase, at a total cost of just under \$5.6 million, or an average of \$82 per household.

Staff conducted a budget survey to determine the most important themes for residents, to help ensure that the budget was developed to support those priorities. The top three themes identified by survey respondents were: infrastructure investment; affordable housing; and good governance and fiscal sustainability.

Following the overview of the budget, the individual departmental budgets were presented as follows:

Corporate Serving Departments:

- Office of the CAO - presented by Sean Morphy, Deputy CAO
- Facilities - presented by Sean Morphy
- Information Technology - presented by Sean Morphy
- Corporate Services - presented by Sam Dinsmore
- Non-Departmental - presented by Sam Dinsmore
- Government Relations - presented by Aaron Stauch, Director of Government Relations

- Human Resources - presented by Jenn Robinson, Director of Human Resources

Community Development Departments:

- Economic Development - presented by Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development
- Planning and Development - presented by Jack Van Dorp, Director of Planning and Development
- Transportation and Environmental Services - presented by Adam Stanley, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services

Community Services Departments:

- Human Services - presented by Tina Metcalfe, Director of Human Services
- Library Services - presented by Brook McLean, Director of Library Services
- Long-Term Care - presented by Megan Garland, Director of Long-Term Care and Senior Services
- Museum - presented by Cathy McGirr, Director of Museum and Cultural Services
- Paramedic Services - presented by Steve Schaus, Director Paramedic Services

Members of Council requested additional information on the following items:

- whether the County's \$100,000 contribution towards homelessness programs could be funded through the tax stabilization reserve instead of new levy funds
- consider building capacity and entering into agreements with private developers to manage units in private buildings in addition to buildings fully managed by Bruce County Housing Corporation for affordable housing units
- additional information about private sector long-term care homes and the future need for long-term care beds in Bruce County

- Tobermory Paramedic station - information requested regarding whether that location should be relocated, and whether the purchase and installation of the generator should be deferred in case the facility is moved to another location

10. **Reports - for Direction**
11. **Motions and Notice of Motions**
12. **By-laws**
13. **Communications (including Minutes of Boards & Committees)**
14. **Closed Session**
15. **Report from Closed Session**
16. **Confirmation of Proceedings**
17. **Adjournment**

Resolution # C-2024-161

Moved by Councillor Jay Kirkland

Seconded by Councillor Milt McIver

That the meeting of Bruce County Council adjourn at 1:56 p.m.

Carried

Luke Charbonneau, Deputy Warden

Linda White, Clerk