





the Township of South-West Oxford, due to the portion of the 401 included within the boundary adjustment, which Mt. Elgin will no longer be called to.

- Insurance has increased in all areas going into 2021.
- New rims and tires are needed for Rescue #3.
- Revenue has also been projected to decrease for Fire Hall #3 due to the boundary adjustment with Woodstock.
- The costs associated for training inspectors has been absorbed into the overall training budget; these members received certification in 2020.
- A new meeting room is proposed for Fire Hall #2 (Mt. Elgin). This will finish off the space on the second level to separate it from the bay.
- Eleven sets of bunker gear are required in 2021. They have been ordered; current processing time is about six months.
- The new Fire Chief will likely review the proposed capital budget to ensure estimates going forward are rationalized. It was noted that long-term contributions to reserves for vehicles needs to be increased going forward to ensure that the Township does not need to debenture vehicles.

In response to an inquiry from Mayor Mayberry it was explained that the overall 9% budget increase for Emergency Services is primarily due to increased insurance costs and the increased transfer to reserves. The planned 2020 purchase of a pumper has been delayed to 2021, because there were not enough funds available for the purchase.

Treasurer Diane Larder explained that costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic are included within the emergency management section of the budget. The safe restart funding that was received to assist with COVID-19 will be carried over to 2021. Contracted out services are also included which includes an increase in cleaning of the shop and the main office. Student costs are also included for three days a week.

Discussion took place regarding potential loss of revenue due to the Ingersoll/SWOX boundary adjustment. Fire Hall #2 will likely see the greatest impact; Fire Hall #3 will not be significantly impacted based on the portion of the 401 included within the boundary adjustment. The Township's fire department will not be providing mutual aid to the Town of Ingersoll on the 401. Mutual aid will be provided for tanker support at fires.

There is a proposed increase for the fire department's support vehicle (Chevrolet Equinox); the vehicle is in need of new tires.

Council agreed to include \$2,500 in the 2021 budget for public education.

### Health Services (Boards)

Treasurer Diane Larder provided a summary to Council of the proposed 2021 operating and capital budgets for township halls and parks. She advised that staff decided not to proceed with key fobs for all buildings this year. There are increased costs included for staffing within the budget for the shift in responsibilities from by-law enforcement to facilities. By-law enforcement services will be contracted out in 2021.

Mrs. Larder reviewed the requests that have been received from Township hall and park committees. The following comments were made:

- It was noted that Dereham Centre Hall has requested to continue with air conditioning, two picnic tables and kitchen upgrades in 2021 (triple sink, new lighting, dishwasher);
- Grant to Mt. Elgin cemetery to be reduced to \$4,000;
- Council discussed the proposed storage addition to the Mt. Elgin Community Centre. CAO Mary Ellen Greb explained that the hall is running out of storage space for tables and chairs. The space that is currently used makes it hard to access the heating and cooling system and blocks the exit out the east side of the building. The expansion is planned for the northwest side of the building to align the exterior of the building with the stage. The estimated cost for this project is approximately \$120,000. Council questioned if the expansion can be put off for another year due to the likelihood of the hall having fewer rentals in 2021 due to the ongoing pandemic and gathering restrictions. Council agreed to remove the storage expansion project from the budget in 2021 and proceed with the hall committee's request for a digital sign instead in 2021. The digital sign is estimated to cost approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000. Councillor Pickard commented that he would like to see a plan, drawings and building costs for the storage expansion when this project proceeds. \$120,000 will be removed from the Mt. Elgin Hall for the proposed expansion and \$45,000 will be added for the digital sign;
- Council agreed to removed \$12,000 from Foldens Park for the proposed homerun fence. It was noted that only six ball games were played there this year;
- Brownsville Hall required a floor cleaner at an estimated cost of \$5,000. Lighting in the Brownsville pavilion also requires upgrade to LED lighting. There is only one light currently working in the pavilion. \$18,500 proposed for Brownsville will be reduced to \$13,500;
- Salford Hall and Brownsville Hall line painting may be deferred one year. Council suggested that this be done all at the same time. Works Superintendent Adam Prouse advised that the County will do this work for the cost of time and materials;

- \$9,000 was removed from Sweaburg park which was allocated for clay on the ball diamond;
- The capital project planned for Hilltop Park in 2021 is sidewalks. Works Superintendent Adam Prouse will be obtaining pricing for this project. Public works staff may be able to do the work for less than a contractor.

### Reserves

Treasurer Diane Larder reviewed the projected transfer to and from reserves in 2021. She noted that the funds outlined in the draft budget do not include the amount to be used towards the generator. She also advised that the compensation to be received from the Ingersoll boundary adjustment is also not yet included. The funds transferred from the 2019 surplus are included in the draft. The proposed budget will result in approximately \$1 million transferred from reserves; \$475,000 of this is for the purchase of the Beachville Tanker. \$60,000 will be transferred from reserves for fibre internet which will bring the tax increase down to approximately 1.78%.

Treasurer Diane Larder advised that the Township has approximately \$4.4 million in reserves. The Township's asset management policy requires that 4% be transferred into reserves; this will be short in 2021.

Further, Council reviewed the tax increases approved by Council over the last ten years. The tax increase proposed in the draft 2021 budget reflects the lowest tax increase the Township has had in the last ten years.

Treasurer Larder will bring forward a report to Council to outline the financial implications of the Ingersoll/SWOX boundary adjustment and funds received as a result of the Woodstock boundary adjustment. Chief Administrative Officer Mary Ellen Greb will bring forward a report to Council regarding the cost of living adjustment which was set at 0.7% in October.

### New Business

#### Hillhorst Drain

Staff was advised that Mr. Hilhorst passed away. The Township will need to look into who the Executor of the estate is to ensure that they are notified when this project proceeds to consideration of the engineer's report (branch of VanWynsberg Drain).

#### Broadband Internet Funding

Mayor David Mayberry presented an idea to Council for funding fibre internet connection within the Township. He estimates that to service every property,

after SWIFT 1 projects are completed, it will likely cost in excess of \$10 million; approximately 900 properties will remain not serviced within the Township. He suggested a proposal to assist with funding which would require property owners to pay into the fund (approximately \$1,000 for each property left to service) to have fibre at the road. This represents approximately 10% of the cost (\$900,000).

It was discussed that in the larger urban centres and in settlement areas, there is more of a business case for the private sector to get a return on their investment for fibre installation; however, this isn't the case in the rural areas. The Township, and/or property owners, will need to pay for this in addition to Provincial and Federal funding that may be available. It was also noted that staff would need to look into the legality of a program like the one proposed. CAO Mary Ellen Greb commented that it may be compared to the Ontario Home Renewal Program which was an agreement between the property owner and the Township for payback over a period of time. The details regarding an agreement like this would still need to be worked out.

Council discussed the proposal and noted that there may be pushback from the community if property owners are required to pay but don't plan to connect to fibre internet. Some residents are happy with the service that they currently have. It was noted that having fibre at the road is a benefit to the property and will have a positive impact on property values. Similar to drainage projects, property owners are required to pay into the drain based on the benefit to the property. This was also compared to water and sewer charges and connection requirements were also discussed. There may be an opportunity to defer the payment until a property owner decides to connect.

#### Format of Upcoming Council Meetings

Council agreed to meet in person for the December 1<sup>st</sup> Council meeting. Council will meet virtually for the December 15<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. The Community Control Group will be meeting again on Thursday of this week to discuss at what point Council should meet virtually vs. in person.

#### Council/Staff Christmas Lunch (Grab and Go Lunch)

The Council/Staff Christmas Lunch will take place on Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 at the municipal office. Members of Council are welcome to attend to hand out lunches and Christmas cards.



