

Tough three years ahead for Shelburne as Council prepares for 2020 budget talks

Written By PETER RICHARDSON

Shelburne Council are already preparing to tighten their belts with deliberations over the municipality's 2020 budget on the horizon.

Town Treasurer Carey Holmes tabled a first-ever budget framework document to Council on Monday evening - and the details didn't quite make for exciting reading for our elected officials.

The document outlines exactly what Council should expect to see in the 2020 budget, and it isn't going to be a cheap one. The upcoming draft operating budget is to include an overall tax levy increase not to exceed 8 percent. It will include a 2.88 percent levy, equalling approximately \$200,562, to be placed in a reserve for 'Emergency Services Accommodations', read police housing. Remember when you were told that keeping the local police force would cost you? Well, here is the start of those costs.

This levy, is the amount equal to a debenture payment, should a loan need to be assumed. There is to be a 2 percent, or \$139,100, levy to assist in contributing to the future capital costs of parks and recreation infrastructure.

In addition, it will include money for a electrical generator for Town Hall, for emergency management and a new reserve for emergency Mmanagement.

It should be noted here, that growth in 2018 was less that 0.69 percent and will be even lower in 2019. Some 84 percent of Shelburne's assessment base is residential assessment. In other words, the residential taxpayer will foot the majority of any tax increase in the town, and there are other unavoidable cost drivers that will affect life in Shelburne, including legislative changes at the federal and provincial level, with 39 percent of Town income derived from boards of management, such as police, fire, library, arena and conservation. In addition, service level changes, project implementation and other services coming from the Community Improvement Plan, strategic priorities and others, will have both an initial capital impact and ongoing implications for future years, depending upon the nature of the project.

The labour contract for the Shelburne Police Service expires on Dec. 31. Cost increases related to subsequent re-negotiations will not be known by the time the 2020 Budget is adopted. Nevertheless, accommodation must be made to meet those increases. The Town must bargain in good faith.

Added to this will be expected increase in CPP, EI, WSIB, EHT and OMERS contributions. All of these are uncontrollable increases that will not be known before March of 2020, but that affect all payroll and salary expenses.

The next three years are going to be extremely difficult financially and will require hard decisions on the part of both ratepayers and Council if Shelburne is to prosper and grow.