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2021 draft budget calls for 1.6 percent tax increase for local homeowners

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Shelburne Town Council are continuing with their discussions on a potential budget for 2021, with the presentation of the public portion of the 2021 draft budget during their most recent meeting on Monday (Nov. 9).

Carey Holmes, the Town's treasurer, presented the different break downs of the 2021 draft budget to both members of Council and the wider community during the meeting.

Holmes noted that the estimated amount to be raised by taxation this coming year is a shade over $7.8 million, which is calculated by taking the total general operating expenses for 2021 of $10.3 million and subtracting expected revenues of around $2.5 million.

The total estimate for general operating expenses of $10,316,800 is split up amongst eight expenditures, which include; police ($3,364,630); public works ($2,020,994); general government and town hall ($992,801); planning and development ($1,145,267); fire protection ($455,155); council and committees ($179,040), and other protective services ($274,300).

Shelburne has a tax stabilization reserve that is set up to help offset financially challenging years and ?can be utilized to reduce the taxpayer burden?. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this reserve have been recommended to be used to bring down the increase in the tax rate.

?We have used approximately 1.5 percent, or $118,500, from the tax stabilization reserve to lower the 2021 tax rate,? said Holmes.

The homeowner tax impact for the drafted 2021 budget, which is based on an average single family home assessment of $335,366, will result in a tax levy increase of around 4.7 percent. Holmes said that would mean a tax rate increase of 1.6 percent, which amounts to $39.66 per year, or $3.30 per month, for the average household on the town portion of their tax bill.

The drafted budget for 2021 also addressed the coming year's capital projects, totalling $2,027,976.

Holmes said that this amount will be used for improvements at Town Hall ($153,382), various paving projects ($808,233), a trackless machine ($168,000) and projects such as the splash pad ($700,000), tennis court ($200,000) and upgrades to the Jack Downing Park.

The presentation to the public broke down where $1 of taxpayer's money goes: $0.37 Police Services, $0.24 Public Works, $0.12 Recreation and Culture, $0.10 Planning and Development, $0.06 General Government and Town Hall, $0.06 Fire Services, $0.03 Other Protective Services, $0.02 Council and Committees

The Water and Sewer capital for the drafted 2021 budget is set at $6,008,932, with multiple scheduled upgrades coming up next year.

Shelburne Council is scheduled to officially approve the 2021 draft budget on Nov. 23 and have a by-law adapted Dec. 14.