

Dufferin County raises taxes by 4 per cent

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Dufferin County Council have wrapped up their duties for the year after approving the budget for 2024.

During their meeting last Thursday (Dec. 14), Dufferin County Council approved the 2024 budget with a tax levy increase of 4 per cent, or \$15.36 per \$100,000 of assessment based on MPAC'S property assessment, on the County's portion of resident's tax bill.

“Dufferin County's 2024 Budget will support our growing community with investments in climate action and digital modernization, upgrades and maintenance on important capital infrastructure, and a focus on using our Climate and Equity Lenses to ensure we are making decision with social and environmental considerations in alignment with our long-term objectives,” said Dufferin County Warden Darren White. “The Budget was developed with a focus on moving our ambitious Strategic Plan forward, and will allow us to continue to build a community that grows together.”

Aimee Raves, manager of corporate finance and treasurer of Dufferin County, presented a recap of the 2024 draft budget to councillors, which initially recommended a tax levy increase of 7.45 per cent or \$49,018,000 in tax dollars.

The tax levy is the amount of money required to be raised from property taxes to fund the business of the County after applying all other sources of revenue, including internal transfers from reserves.

According to the initially proposed budget, for the County to continue with its current services, also known as the status quo, the tax levy increase would be 7.36 per cent plus 1.81 per cent for additional costs for staffing, paramedic enhancement and the physician recruitment program.

Factoring in the assessment growth rate, which is at 1.72 per cent, would bring the status quo down to 7.45 per cent.

During their Nov. 23 meeting, councillors raised concerns with the recommended tax levy increase and had indicated five specific revisions to the budget that would reduce the budget by about \$1.5 million and lead to a tax levy increase of 4 per cent.

A one per cent reduction in the tax levy is equivalent to \$448,996, so in order for County Council to lower the tax levy to four per cent, they needed to reduce the budget by \$1.5 million.

Through deliberations of committee budgets, County Council was able to agreed on four of the five suggested revisions, which decreased the tax levy increase by 3.45 per cent bringing the tax levy to 4 per cent with the growth rate factored in.

The total tax levy increase for the 2024 budget to support the delivery of service is \$47, 469,913 or 4 per cent. The levy includes a \$7,513,497 capital investment towards the purchase or replacement of assets, which will prepare for future contingencies and operating, capital and special initiatives.

Raves noted that the 4 per cent tax levy increase is low compared to other municipalities in the area that have yet to pass their budgets.

“I know a lot of the counties they're the same as we are; they started about 10 per cent and trying to figure out how to bring it down,” said Raves.

The full Dufferin County budget for 2024 including division overviews and highlights are available for public viewing on the

County of Dufferin website at www.dufferincounty.ca