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Council approves $2 million funding of wastewater plant expansion designs

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The Town of Shelburne is moving forward with an expansion to its wastewater treatment plant, approving funding for its design.

Shelburne Town Council, during their meeting on April 26, approved $2 million in funding from the wastewater reserve to finance the design portion of the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) upgrades.

According to the report to council, the town's wastewater reserve balance at the end of 2020 was $3.4 million with an estimated budgeted transfer of $723,265 added through rates collected. The balance of the sewer reserve is estimated to be $4 million by the end of 2021.

Shelburne's director of finance and treasurer, Carey Holmes said once the design phase is completed and construction commences, the sewer reserve can be replenished from development charges.

The design work for the expansion is set to begin following the completion of the plant's environmental assessment (EA) study.

?It's about a year design time frame,? said Stephen Burnett, the Town's engineer. ?If the EA wraps up mid-summer, this should have the design completed by mid to late summer next year pending any hiccups.?

An allocation report of the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) found that there is not sufficient allocation for new and proposed developments. Shelburne Town council received a report in September 2020, which gave the Town three options for upgrading the plant, and estimated the cost of upgrades between $26 million to $34 million.

The report states, a pilot testing of membrane bioreactors (MBR) water treatment, one of the options given to council for the WPCP expansion, was recently approved by council.

The WPCP environmental assessment will be finalized pending the ?confirmatory results of the pilot study?, which will be completed in the next two months.

Design for the expansion is estimated to require a minimum of one year, while construction will take a minimum of two, following to completion of the design.

The Town is also undergoing an environmental assessments on the water supply, which has seen issues in servicing and capacity as well.

In 2020, PW1 or well #1 was taken off-line due to low production. New pumps were installed, rehabilitating the well, but due to air entrainment issues it has remained off-line. Burnett noted they are working on treating the ?bubbles', which are part of the wells design, installing new equipment, screening, and up to two air release valves.

?The plan is to have well #1 back online by about mid-summer of 2021,? said Burnett. ?If rehabilitation works do not work and we cannot deal with this air entrainment issue then alternatively a new well would potentially be required here, but ultimately [the] prognosis is pretty good.?

The Town saw well #3 minimized in use to limit the naturally occurring arsenic levels, which are above the newly reduced drinking water limits, while a new filtration system was being designed. During the wells rehabilitation, it showed signs of being GUDI

(groundwater under the direct influence surface water), and taken off-line. Project costs for the well are now estimated at $3 million, up from the originally estimated $1.77 million.

Work is also being done on PW7 (well #7) and PW8 (well #8), in an attempt to run them together which would double the amount of supply and could increase the flow of PW5 (well #5) and PW6 (well #6) from 75 per cent to 100.

Burnett added that a source water protect plan would need updating in consultation with the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA).

?Although most of this information and testing results will be submitted in late spring/early summer it is not anticipated that the approval will be issued until late spring/early summer 2022 for implementation of these improvements,? said Burnett.

Burnett said that once the wells are turned back on the Town could meet wastewater demands for more than 15 years, with a new well needed in 2035.