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Dufferin County 2022 budget proposes 0.96 per cent tax levy

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Dufferin County staff have proposed a tax levy increase of 0.96 per cent for the 2022 budget.

During their meeting on Jan. 13, Dufferin County Council was given a presentation on the draft 2022 budget from manager of corporate finance and treasurer for the county, Aimee Raves.

?We entered 2021 with many unknowns,? said Raves to begin the budget presentation. ?As we enter 2022 we have made progress, yet there still remains uncertainty.?

In developing the draft 2022 budget, Raves noted that there were a number of factors taken into consideration that influenced the tax levy including impacts from COVID-19 on operations, and ongoing costs.

The County is specifically seeing ongoing costs with work continuing on the Strategic Action Plan as well as impending program changes for paramedic services, children's services, and Ontario Works.

?As we move into 2022 there are plenty of other priorities, constraints, and considerations that were top of mind while developing this budget,? said Raves.

When preparing a budget, Raves noted working with a specific target in mind and further explained what is considered a ?good' target.

Raves said a zero per cent increase on the budget is not realistic as the county sees cost increases annually, but added that looking at the cost of inflation (4.7 per cent) is also unrealistic for a budget target as it is ?too high?.

?Preliminary work on the budget had it sitting over five per cent,? said Raves. ?Further time and analysis provided us with the ability to make refinements in a number of areas resulting in something a bit more reasonable.?

After refinements were made on the proposed budget, a tax levy requirement of 983,000 or 2.38 per cent was determined for a budget of just over $42 million. With growth estimated at 1.42 per cent, the final net levy increase is 0.96 per cent.

Specifics on increases and decreases in various county department is planned to be discusses at the committee level.

County Council's next step in the budget process in to have further discussions at their upcoming committee meetings on Jan. 27.