

## Shelburne council approves 2025 budget with five per cent tax increase



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Shelburne Town Council has officially approved a five per cent tax rate increase as part of their 2025 budget.

During their meeting on Nov. 25, Shelburne Town Council received the draft 2025 budget report for the third time and directed staff to proceed with bringing forward a by-law to adopt the budget.

“We are at that point in time, I think, where we’re ready to move ahead with this,” said Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills. “We’ve moved through each of the phases of our scheduled budget process, starting with the draft presentation to council, the public meeting at our last council meeting and here we are now; ready to go.”

The estimated amount to be raised by taxation in 2025 is just over \$10.8 million, calculated by taking the total operating expenses of \$13.6 million for 2024 and subtracting the revenues of around \$2.7 million.

The total estimate for the 2025 general operating expenses of \$13,655,223 is split up amongst 10 expenditures: general government and town hall (\$3,050,951); council and committees (\$185,303); planning and development (\$1,410,142); police protection (\$1,129,409); fire protection (\$880,622); other protective services (\$679,515); operations, waste management and storm (\$2,690,316); cemetery (\$167,134); recreation and culture (\$1,596,317); and a one-time transfer to reserves (\$1,865,513).

Some of the increase in expenses is the result of three additional staff positions in the town, which include a part-time bylaw officer position moving to full-time, a bylaw administrative assistant and a part-time landscaper. The town has also budgeted to include Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) based on a revenue-neutral structure.

One general expense the Town of Shelburne is expected to see a decrease in for the 2025 budget is police services. In 2024, the total billing cost for OPP services was just over \$3.1 million and in 2025, the cost has come in at \$1.6 million for a total savings of roughly \$1.5 million.

?During the costing that the consultant did in 2021, it was estimated that we would experience a significant saving, and this is the first year that we have now transitioned to the cost recovery methodology,? explained Carey Holmes, director of financial services and treasurer for the Town of Shelburne, at Council's Nov. 4 meeting.

The Town of Shelburne has also received a reconciliation credit of \$666,072 from the OPP from 2023, making to total savings of \$2.2 million. It was recommended to take \$359,000 from the savings in order to keep the tax rate increase under five per cent.

The remaining \$1.8 million in savings was transferred to an unrestricted reserve.

According to the 2025 draft report, the homeowner tax impact of a five per cent increase, based on an average single-family home assessment of \$335,366, amounts to an additional \$138 annually or \$11.54 per month on the town portion.

The Nov. 4 presentation from Holmes showed residents a detailed breakdown of where \$1 of a taxpayer's money goes: \$0.09 to Police Protection, \$0.17 for the one-time transfer to reserves, \$0.25 to Operations, \$0.14 to Recreation and Culture, \$0.09 to Planning and Development, \$0.08 to Fire Protection, \$0.11 to General Government and Town Hall, \$0.05 to Other Protective Services, and \$0.02 to Council and Committees.

The 2025 budget addresses a number of capital projects, including \$101,311 for upgrades to the lighting and HVAC as well as an additional vehicle for the bylaw department; \$782,412 for paving, roads' needs, drainage cleanout and the cemetery needs; \$2,398,072 to spend on new equipment, replacements, a workshop expansion and cold storage; and \$4,880,726 to go towards projects identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The entire budget for phase one of the Fiddle Park redevelopment is based on a project cost of \$3.69 million, which was included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan section of Shelburne's 2025 draft budget.

The 2024 budget totals \$8,186,211 for the listed capital projects.

Water and Sewer capital projects total just over \$2.5 million for 2024. The projects associated with water include continued changes to Well #1 and Well #9, replacing a 2008 water truck and repainting the exterior of the old water tower. Sewer capital projects consist of the continued engineering design for the waste pollution control plant and the replacement of sewer camera equipment.

The by-law to adopt the 2025 budget is expected to come forward at Shelburne's Town Council meeting on Dec. 9.