# Shelburne Council approves 5 per cent tax increase

Written By Joshua Drakes

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of Shelburne approved its 2026 municipal budget with a 5 per cent tax increase, despite total operating costs rising to roughly $15.57 million, representing a 14 per cent increase over 2025.

The town used funds from reserves and savings from its switch to the OPP to reduce the tax increase in the 2026 budget.

Town expenses are rising across nearly every department. Operations, including roads, traffic, and maintenance, increased in cost by nearly $500,000 from 2025 to 2026, while recreation costs rose by roughly $660,000. The Town of Shelburne said that these rises are the result of inflation, growth-related needs and the general costs of providing services to a growing town.

Normally, that large an increase in operating costs would be accompanied by a large tax increase to offset it, but because the town had previously planned ahead, there were several options to explore.

The town said switching to OPP policing was a key factor in offsetting rising operating costs. The town is projected to save roughly $2 million in 2026 through the OPP, and the town utilized just over $500,000 of that money to help keep taxes down. The remaining funds were put in a reserve account to cover future costs.

The immediate impact on taxpayers will be a 5 per cent tax increase. What that means for residents is that, on average, they will pay an additional $145.94 per year, or $12.16 per month.

The town's capital budget in 2026 totals just over $8.4 million. Almost half of this, totalling nearly $4.3 million, will go into infrastructure work, specifically on Pinegrove Avenue.

Meanwhile, roughly $2.5 million will be going into operations. This will include new equipment for the town and expansions of the town's workshop and cold storage. An additional $1.37 million will go to Parks and Recreation. Just under $200,000 will go towards Town Hall, By-Law and cemetery. The By-Law Department is purchasing a new vehicle, and a new Columbarium will be installed at Shelburne's cemetery. There is also a focus on updating HVAC.

Separately, $2.57 million will be going into Water & Wastewater Capital Projects, $1.35 million will go towards repainting the exterior of the old water tower, and $955,000 will be used for Well number 1 Upgrades and Well number 9 Engineering. As well, $250,000 is going to the Wastewater Pollution Control Plant design and engineering costs, and $15,000 is for fencing around the Hyland Village Pumphouse.

The town stressed that these projects will not have a heavy impact on taxpayers, as only 1 per cent of funding will come from taxes. The rest will be drawn from other sources, such as reserves and development charges.

Despite concerns about the 5 per cent budget increase, it was largely accepted and commended by the town council and community members in attendance.

Alan Selby, a Dufferin County resident and retired treasurer for the County of Dufferin, was thoroughly impressed by the approach taken by town staff in assembling this budget. He especially applauded the town for never relying on the short-lived automated speed enforcement (ASE) program to generate town revenue.