

Shelburne council reviews draft budget with proposed tax increase of 5.4 per cent

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Shelburne council has reviewed the 2026 draft budget and agreed to present it to a public meeting on Nov. 24.

The budget briefing, headed by Carey Holmes, director of financial services and treasurer, was heard by council on Monday, Oct. 27, at a regular meeting. Holmes outlined the three budget framework report recommendations presented to council on Oct. 6 to start the briefing.

"We have three suggestions," Holmes said. "That was to prepare an overall budget with tax rate increase not to exceed 5 per cent, it included two new staff positions, and it also made the suggestion that if required, we could use a portion of the OPP savings to keep the tax rate at 5 per cent."

Holmes continued by saying that the budget is as planned previously, and no changes have been made from earlier briefings that led to this plan.

"There aren't any surprises in this budget," Holmes said. "Council already this year has dealt with the asset management plan update, as well as adopting the 10-year financial plan. Both of those documents made this one."

The town budget is looking at a 5.4 per cent increase to the tax levy to cover the costs of running the municipality in 2026.

The town is facing low growth going into the 2026 budget, with growth being below 0.5 per cent. The suggested 5.4 percent tax levy increase is intended to offset the town's slowing growth.

The town is also still awaiting the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) 2026 billing information, which it has not yet received from the province.

Holmes said the town has prepared for this in the budget, but has not received an exact figure.

"We don't have the estimated 2026 OPP billing, and we may not have it until Nov. 30," Holmes said. "So the staff did an estimation of where we think our budget will come in at, and based on the letter we received from the province that said it could be capped at 11 percent, we went with 11 percent, the worst-case scenario."

The town can also draw from a reserve it set aside after receiving additional savings following the OPP's 2025 billing amendment.

With the potential rough spots identified and no glaring issues, council voted to take the proposed draft budget to a public meeting on Nov. 24. At that point, further discussions on the draft budget will be held with public involvement.