

Municipality of Port Hope Council Approves 2023 Budget

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, February 7, 2023 - Port Hope, ON

At their regular Council meeting this evening, Municipality of Port Hope Council voted to approve the 2023 budget.

“Our budget preparation is among the most important tasks for Council each year,” states Mayor Hankivsky. “The process is a lengthy one as the budget provides a foundation to meet the public service needs of our residents and to make decisions on municipal infrastructure. Post-pandemic recovery and inflation are not only affecting citizens but also our Municipality in profound ways. We are tasked with delivering a wide range of services with limited ways to raise revenues. The harsh reality is that we must strengthen the focus on asset management planning and set aside more money for our infrastructure, so that we do not fall further behind and face skyrocketing costs and an unsustainable future. Responsible but difficult decisions were made by Council, and we will continue to ensure that our community’s future is protected and sustainable.”

Council members deliberated for over 15 hours in two full days at the public Finance Committee meetings on January 31 and February 2. The approved budget focuses primarily on maintaining and improving infrastructure, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and investing in local economic development. To meet these challenges requires an overall increase to the levy, after growth in the tax base, of 4.3 per cent for operating expenses and 4 per cent dedicated to infrastructure.

For the taxpayer, this amounts to:

- A 4.2 per cent property tax increase for property owners in the urban area.
- A 6.2 per cent property tax increase for property owners in the rural area.
(2023 will be the last year of the 10 year tax allocation phase-in adjustment)

For a typical single detached home, the change in total property tax annually is:

- An estimated \$183 municipal tax increase for property owners in the urban area.
 - (Equivalent to an estimated increase of \$3.52 additional per week)
- An estimated \$226 municipal tax increase for property owners in the rural area.
 - (Equivalent to an estimated increase of \$4.34 additional per week)

The approved budget provides for the delivery of a number of important service increases and includes significant projects that move the Municipality of Port Hope towards a more sustainable future that meets the needs of our residents:

- An additional \$576,986 has been allocated to assist with closing the infrastructure gap. This represents an additional 2.6% infrastructure levy dedicated to meeting the challenge of maintaining core assets in accordance with asset management goals. The cost of maintaining and replacing our infrastructure rose by 15 per cent in 2022 alone due to inflation.
- \$95,000 is assigned to address the impacts of climate change and build a plan for a sustainable future.
- \$250,000 is being invested in economic development and tourism strategy development to help boost the economy by attracting new businesses and helping existing businesses expand. The identification of an updated comprehensive surplus lands inventory will also identify further opportunities for development. This effort is geared toward addressing the critical need to shift the tax burden off residential homeowners through the creation of a more diversified local economy.
- \$18 million in total will be allocated to important Capital projects, including a transit bus replacement, Sylvan Glen Bridge replacement, Walker Road rehabilitation, Fire Station 3 (Garden Hill) repairs, additional rural roads resurfacing, a fire truck replacement, critical waterfront trail repairs, Town Park Recreation Centre expansion, and the Walton Street reconstruction project.
- Operating budget highlights include investing further in IT advancement and security improvements to assist in addressing customer service delivery and the growing challenge of cyber security. Added investment into staffing and equipment for the Fire Services will assist in keeping the community safe. An additional Roads Operator for the rural area will assist with road maintenance.

“After much discussion and deliberation, this Council recognizes that it is imperative to focus on attracting more business and industry to our community,” continues Mayor Hankivsky. “The slow growth of our economy is hampering our ability to pay for our infrastructure, which is then a burden on our homeowners. The investments in the 2023 budget are intended to address these shortcomings by helping to close the infrastructure gap, combat the impacts of climate change, and increase economic growth to help offset residential property taxes in the future. It is a responsible, long-term vision to help strengthen, build, and advance our community.”

The total municipal levy for 2023 amounts to \$24.3 million and makes up approximately 42 per cent of the Municipality’s \$55 million total budget. The Municipality will generate the remaining funds needed through a combination of grants, reserves, fees for service and other revenue-generating activities.

Additional communications dedicated to highlighting the adoption of the Municipal Budget will continue throughout the coming weeks.

- 30 -

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