

Present: Mayor Mitchell (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Drumm (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Leahy (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Lee (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Mulcahy (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Newman (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Roy (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Shahid (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Yamada (Participating Virtually)

Also Present: M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer
S. Beale, Commissioner of Public Works
W. Mar, Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor
J. Romano, Commissioner of Community Services
R. Saunders, Commissioner of Planning and Development
D. Speed, Fire Chief
F. Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer
H. Ellis, Executive Advisor to the Mayor
C. Harris, Town Clerk
K. Douglas, Legislative Specialist (Recording Secretary)

Regrets: None noted

1. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest
 - 1.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.
2. Public Meeting - 2021 Operating and Capital Budget
Councillor Lee, Chair of Finance, provided an overview of the public meeting format.
 - 2.1 Presentation - 2021 Budget Overview
F. Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer

F. Wong, Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer, provided an overview of the proposed 2021 Budget. Key highlights of the presentation included:

- the 2021 budget process timeline, including the launch of the Citizen Budget Tool in October 2020 and publishing of the budget books in January 2021;
- the projected financial impact of COVID-19 on 2021 operations, primarily due to the closure of recreational facilities and programs;
- the 2021 budget adjustments to mitigate the financial impact of COVID-19, such as reducing operating expenses and a one-time reduction to the Asset Management Reserve Fund contribution;
- key considerations when building the 2021 budget, including community priorities, maintaining services and infrastructure, growth, and COVID-19;
- budget pressures related to maintaining community services, partially offset by a line-by-line review of expenses that identified reductions and efficiencies;
- the cost of maintaining the Town's infrastructure, which increases annually due to inflation and additional infrastructure assumed by the Town;
- the estimated cost associated with the Town's anticipated population growth, offset by development charges and assessment growth;
- the 0.55 percent property tax increase to the Town's portion of the property tax bill in order to achieve a balanced 2021 budget;
- the proposed 2021 capital budget of \$87 million, which is financed by development charges, property taxes, growth reserves, the asset management reserve, and federal gas tax;
- proposed capital investments in two district parks and playground equipment, recreational trails, the 2021 roads program, the North Whitby Sports Complex, traffic signs, library upgrades, a hospital feasibility study, diversity and inclusion training, and climate change programs;
- the projected overall property tax bill increase of 1.59 percent, which includes the Educational and Regional portions;
- a comparison of Durham Region municipalities proposed and approved 2021 property tax increases based on a home assessed at \$503,000; and,
- next steps in the 2021 budget process.

2.2 Delegations

There were no delegations.

A question and answer period ensued between Members of Council and Staff regarding:

- the extent to which proposed and approved 2021 property tax

increases of neighbouring municipalities were considered when creating the Town's 2021 budget;

- whether the Town's proposed 2021 property tax increase considers the future expectations of taxpayers;
- the flexibility of the 2021 budget given that assumptions regarding COVID-19 and operational issues may be inaccurate;
- the significant difference between the 2020 committed long term debt and 2021 forecasted long term debt;
- whether the rate of return on the Town's investments and current low interest rates have affected the 2021 budget;
- clarification on the proposed renovations to the Whitby Animal Services Centre and whether the renovations may be postponed;
- the estimated annual cost of maintaining all Town sidewalks during the winter months;
- clarification regarding the annual percent increase to operating costs, should the Town choose to maintain all sidewalks;
- whether the 2021 budget includes trail expansions, and renewals of existing trails within the Town;
- how the Parks Program is funded, including the use of development charges; and,
- clarification regarding the gap between the 2020 and 2021 group benefits expense.

3. Adjournment

3.1 Motion to Adjourn

Moved By Councillor Leahy

Seconded By Councillor Newman

That the meeting adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Christopher Harris, Town Clerk

Don Mitchell, Mayor