

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 26, 2019



Town council approves 2019 budget

Wasaga Beach – Tonight, members of Wasaga Beach town council approved the 2019 budget, a financial road map for the year ahead.

“It is my belief the 2019 budget represents a responsible and prudent use of public funds,” Mayor Nina Bifulchi said. “We have done our utmost to ensure we are tackling projects that matter to the residents of our community. We are investing in all areas of our town and I am proud to say that we are moving Wasaga Beach forward.”

For 2019, the tax rate increase is 2.91 percent on the municipal portion of the tax bill. The impact of the increase on the average assessed home in Wasaga Beach is \$51.92. The overall tax increase may be less once the county and education tax rates are included.

The total operating and capital budgets is \$64 million, an increase of \$9 million when compared to the 2018 budget.

The budget for operating expenditures is \$40.1 million. The operating budget earmarks funds for the hiring of additional staff in strategic areas across multiple departments to improve the level of service provided to our residents.

Funds are also set aside to work with developers in building projects in our community that meet council’s priorities of providing more affordable housing and diversifying the tax base.

Factors affecting the Operating Budget include:

- The decline in the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) grant of \$375k, of which \$94k impacts taxation;
- Ontario Community Infrastructure Grant (OCIF) of \$331k to help fund the Main Street Bridge rehabilitation project;
- New staffing positions added for a total cost of \$388k
 - Senior Accounting Clerk,
 - Seasonal Winter Driver,
 - Full-time Parks Personnel,
 - Planner/Urban Designer,
 - Economic Development Officer – Small Business Development,
 - Planner (contract for Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Update);
- Debenture carrying costs for a fire truck and Main Street Bridge work of \$343k

- Taxation financing of the Beachfront property purchase debenture of \$221k
- Increase in Policing costs of \$125k
- Increase in Transit Operating costs \$123k.

The budget for capital expenditures is \$23.8 million, with the largest portion of this going towards roads and bridges (\$10.6 million).

“Under our capital plan I believe that this budget has identified projects that will help move our town in the right direction,” Mayor Bifulchi said.

Highlights of the 2019 Capital Program are:

Public Works - Main Street Bridge Rehabilitation	\$3,203,500
Public Works - Veterans Way Geometrics	\$2,837,270
Public Works - Ramblewood Dr. Urbanization	\$1,494,010
Recreation, Events, Facilities - New Arena (Design)	\$1,800,000
Library - New Library (Design)	\$1,000,000
Public Works - 58th Street Sidewalk Construction	\$551,000
Fire - New rescue truck	\$550,000
Fleet - Fuel Management System	\$528,290
Parks - Pedestrian Bridges	\$235,000
Parks - Tennis Courts, reconstruction	\$150,000
Beachfront Properties - Repairs and Maintenance	\$108,000
Cemetery - Road extension & Columbarium	\$57,000

“I am pleased to tell you this council will invest more than \$3-million on the rehabilitation of the Main Street Bridge,” the mayor said. “This significant project will ensure a safe route across the Nottawasaga River to our main beach. This transportation investment is especially key as our beachfront develops. And it is an investment that will benefit our town for many years to come.”

A significant investment in the design of the new library is of major importance to council.

“We have set aside \$1-million for the design work. This work is key to ensuring we have the right space to serve our residents,” Mayor Bifulchi said.

And almost \$2-million is budgeted for the design of the new twin pad arena.

“For more than 40 years, the Wasaga Stars Arena has served as one of the gathering spots for us all,” Mayor Bifulchi said. “The investment we are making ensures we will get the facility we need for generations. I can tell you council is truly excited to be pursuing the arena project and we all look forward to watching it roll out over this term of council.”

Another significant investment is almost half a million dollars on the 58th Street Sidewalk project. This will ensure a safer route for pedestrians traveling in the west end to St. Noel Chabanel School and vicinity.

And just over half a million dollars will be invested in a new rescue truck for the Wasaga Beach Fire Department to replace a 26-year-old vehicle.

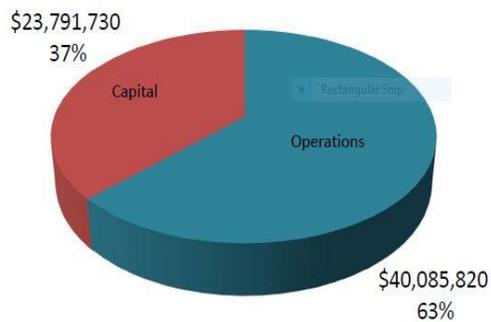
Other investments include new equipment for public works, new tennis courts at Wasaga Sands, new pedestrian bridges to connect the town’s trail system, and significant road upgrades.

The budget outlines that funding for the year come from a variety of sources, starting with \$23.6 million from taxation and \$16.6 million from general reserve and reserve funds, as well as \$8.3 million from rates and fees for services. Other sources include grants, rental revenues, and debentures.

The new council started working on the draft budget in early December 2018. A series of four budget meetings occurred. During the process, staff identified their priorities and council members noted their preferences for the year ahead. Throughout the process there were adjustments made to the budget until it reflected a version that council was prepared to support. A public meeting to invite community input happened on March 19.

“As members of council, we strive to enhance and improve services for the people that live here,” Mayor Bifulchi said. “We have to balance this with the responsible use of tax dollars. And part of doing that means prioritizing the right community projects. I believe that for 2019 we have struck the right balance.”

Total Proposed Budget - \$63.8M



2019 Operating & Capital Expense

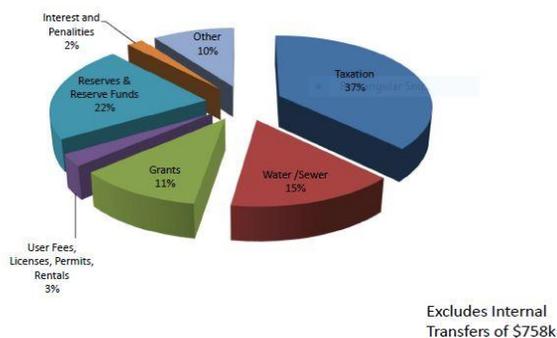
	In Millions
➤ General Government	\$11.0
➤ Community Services	\$16.7
➤ Public Works	\$33.4
➤ Planning & Development	\$ 2.7
Total	\$63.8

New Budget Impacts to 2019

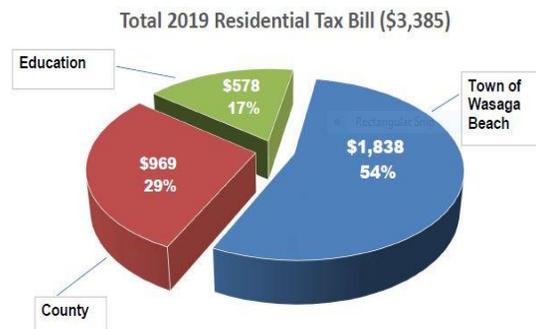
➤ Payroll Step & COLA Increases	\$342k
➤ New Staffing positions	\$388k
➤ Debenture costs (Beachfront 75%)	\$221k
➤ Debenture costs (fire truck/main street bridge)	\$343k
➤ Policing	\$125k
➤ Transit Operating Costs	\$123k
➤ I.T. Contract Services & Security, less reserve	\$115k
➤ Fire Department Wage Increases	\$160k
➤ Parks – EAB funded taxation, Parks Master plan	\$275k
➤ Capital Projects	\$6.2M
➤ OCIF Grant (main street bridge)	\$331k
➤ Reduced OMPF Grant	(\$374k)

Total ~\$8.3 Million

External Revenues & Reserves – \$63.1 Million



Breakdown of 2019 Average Household Tax Bill



Tax Dollars at Work

	Per \$100
Policing (OPP)	20.12
Fire / Health & Safety	15.75
Public Works (including Equipment)	14.97
Administration / Council / Treasury / IT / Clerk	8.46
Recreation & Facilities	6.30
Parks	6.06
Debentures	5.97
Beachfront Management	3.84
Planning	3.42
Winter Maintenance	3.28
Library	2.94
Transit	2.51
Economic Initiatives	1.60
Community Events	1.47
Road Projects	1.44
Vehicle Maintenance (Fleet)	1.31
Municipal Law Enforcement & Animal Control	0.53
Total	100.0

WATCH: Treasurer Jocelyn Lee and the Senior Leadership Team present an overview of the 2019 budget during the March 19 Committee of the Whole – Budget meeting:
<http://bit.ly/2OzO4nL>

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For media requiring additional information, please contact:

Michael Gennings
Communications Officer
Town of Wasaga Beach
(705) 429-3844 ext. 2237
communications@wasagabeach.com
www.wasagabeach.com