



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Council starts work on 2018 draft budget

Wasaga Beach – Members of town council began working on the 2018 draft municipal budget Tuesday, a key policy document that once complete will identify investment priorities for the year ahead.

“This council is committed to creating a budget that is fiscally responsible,” Mayor Brian Smith said. “At the same time, it’s important that we provide the best services possible at the lowest possible tax rate.”

At the Committee of the Whole budget meeting held yesterday, staff presented a report that outlined what department heads feel are the important issues facing their departments in the coming year. Totalled all together the list would result in a 15.33 percent municipal tax rate increase for next year. This figure is just a starting point and will be reduced dramatically as staff and council review the issues and work through the 2018 budget process.

“A budget always has to start somewhere and staff outlined from their individual perspectives what each department requires,” Mayor Smith said. “Next week, council will review the priorities it set for itself at the start of the term, what it has accomplished so far, and what it would like to accomplish in the last year of the term. A staff budget committee, comprised of the CAO, treasurer, and budget analyst, will then take all this information and go through each department budget with the goal of ensuring that existing and proposed expenditures meet the priorities of council. As the budget process moves forward, members of council will have to prioritize what will be a part of next year’s budget and what can wait. It’s a process council goes through each year to establish a budget that is sustainable and affordable to the taxpayer.”

The following is a list of key dates regarding the budget process:

Sept. 5 - Committee of the Whole to consider the 2018 budget assumptions, and receive for information an overview of the opportunities and challenges in preparing the 2018 budget.

Sept. 12 – Committee of the Whole discussion on council priorities for 2018.

Sept. 18 to 20 - CAO, treasurer and budget analyst to review first draft operating and capital budgets with department heads.

Oct. 3 - Committee of the Whole to review first draft operating and capital budgets in summary format. During this meeting, key budget items and council priorities will be discussed further in the context of the status of the first draft of the budget. These will be discussed further at the Oct. 17 meeting.

Oct. 5 – Any discussion items arising from the Oct. 3 meeting are due from members of council to the treasurer.

Oct. 10 - Reports due from staff on discussion items identified by members of council.

Oct. 17 - Committee of the Whole presentation of reports related to discussion items.

Oct. 20 - Proposed changes to 2018 rates and fees due from staff.

Oct. 27 – Four-year operating and 10-year capital forecasts due from staff.

Oct. 31 - Committee of the Whole to review second draft detailed operating and capital budgets and proposed changes to 2018 rates and fees.

Nov. 21 - Committee of the Whole to review third draft operating and capital budgets, four-year operating and 10-year capital forecasts. Treasurer will request permission to advertise the public meeting scheduled for Dec. 12.

Nov. 28 & Dec. 5 - Committee of the Whole budget meetings, if required.

Dec. 12 - Public Meeting for consideration of 2018 operating and capital budgets, four-year operating and 10-year capital forecasts, 2018 rates and fees (including water/wastewater update). Recommendation that bylaw proceed to council once school board and county rates are received.

Dec. 19 - Council approval of 2018 operating and capital budgets, four-year operating and 10-year capital forecasts, and 2018 rates and fees.

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