



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 12, 2017

Budget Update #3

Wasaga Beach – On Tuesday, staff presented the first draft of the 2018 budget to Committee of the Whole.

Treasurer Jocelyn Lee walked committee through the draft budget, which now reflects a **3.06 percent tax rate** increase following a detailed review.

The focus of the staff review was on maintaining service levels and allocating funds to council priority areas.

Within the current draft is \$300,000 for the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan, as well as \$1.1-million for beachfront activities, including Beachfront Management Board expenses, Beach 1 and 2 Enforcement and Maintenance, events, and the Main Street Market.

The draft also includes \$2.5-million to commence the design and engineering for the new arena, indoor recreation space, and library – elements that are proposed to make up the community hub in the new downtown.

The current 3.06 percent municipal tax increase **does not reflect** several new initiatives and service level enhancements proposed by various departments. These items were removed during the staff review of the budget in order to reduce the tax rate increase. Department Heads then crafted **justification reports** for the items not included so the information could be considered by committee.

Department heads spoke about these initiatives during the meeting.

One project calls for the purchase and installation of three digital signs. The signs would be placed at the entry points to town to help convey information about events and programs. The cost is pegged at \$300,000.

Other new initiatives include enhancements to several community special events, such as Easter Extravaganza, Jazz in the Park, Funderland, the annual Christmas tree lighting, and the Santa Claus Parade.

The 2018 draft budget **does include** funding for new staff **required to maintain current service levels** due to the town's growth or to support current council initiatives. This includes a full-time adult and senior services coordinator for the Wasaga Beach Public Library, an additional public works employee, an engineering technician, and a full-time

administrative assistant in the building department. This information was presented to committee for its consideration.

Other investments that are part of the budget include \$40,000 for a roads needs study, \$50,000 for streetlights, \$50,000 for traffic lights, \$6,000 for a non-fixed radar sign, \$200,000 for the Sunnidale Road water main replacement, \$1-million for the Mapleside Drive servicing and road construction project, \$500,000 to address odour control mitigation measures at the sewage treatment facility, and \$687,000 for 62nd and 63rd Streets and Shore Lane storm water management features.

Other initiatives are **still being considered** and will be presented at a future meeting of committee. This includes a review of the Beachfront Management Board's budget, as well as the \$250,000 cost of lifeguards for Beach 1, and funding for an after-hours medical clinic.

In her report to committee, the treasurer noted at this point in time the increase in assessment is being forecasted at approximately 4.23 percent. This includes an estimated growth factor of one percent and the phase-in increase in property values estimated at 3.23 percent. It is important to note that at this point MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation) values are **estimated** and will be **updated in November 2017**. Based on the available information, the increased revenue from assessment for 2018 is \$890,000, with roughly \$204,000 due to growth.

In order to attain a **tax rate increase in the range of two percent**, council has a few options it can consider. One choice is to **defer** the timing of capital projects by prioritizing critical projects and delaying low level items. Another option is to **increase borrowing**. Still, another choice is to make certain projects and programs **solely grant dependent**. Council could also choose to **increase the amount of funding through reserves**. And finally, **service levels could be reduced**.

Next Steps:

Oct. 24: Committee of the Whole discussion and direction to staff on the new initiatives presented at the September 10th Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Oct. 31: Second draft of the budget to be presented to Committee of the Whole.

Nov. 21: Third draft of the budget. Committee of the Whole to review the status of the 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 and **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. 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.

To read the treasurer's Oct. 10 report to committee click here:

<http://www.wasagabeach.com/Shared%20Documents/2017-10-10%20COW-B%20Agenda.pdf>.

To watch the Committee of the Whole budget meeting click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnEaQg512mY>

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