

# **Public Questions**

## **2025 Municipal Budget and Pre-Authorized Tax Payment Plan Changes**

Hi There,

I'd like the below to be included in correspondence for tomorrow's 2PM council meeting.

I would like to address two topics in this communication:

1. The recent PAP change for residents
2. 2025 Draft Operating Budget

### **PAP Changes**

While the reasoning behind the recent PAP-plan changes is understood, there is concern about the lack of communication, the swift decision-making, and the absence of a plan to reinstate the 12-month payment option for residents in the future.

Communication surrounding this change was sent via email on Christmas Eve. Decisions on path forward were to be made by January 15. The time between the last 2024 installment and first installment of 2025 was 3 weeks. The change management of this was poorly handled and gave little-to-no time for residents to prepare. I'd like to note that in future, a proper transition plan should be incorporated. Additionally, at a recent council meeting it was reported that the town's response to this change was "overwhelmingly positive." I can attest to this with my own conversations and observations of social media discussions. What would have been better, is if a survey was sent (even an email, low cost approach survey) to understand the true response, rather than using a sentiment received through limited conversations. My personal conversations around this topic have confirmed many residents are experiencing difficulty with the new February 10th payment deadline, especially those on fixed incomes who opted for the 10-month payment plan and now face increased monthly payments.

My main concern with this change is why a plan was not developed to transition the tax roll framework to a December-November timeline, ensuring funds are received by November 1. A gradual transition could have minimized the impact on residents. Currently, there are fewer payment options compared to surrounding municipalities, and there is no clear plan to restore the 12-month payment option. Due to the approach taken, residents are encountering pain now, and likely will again if the town does decide to bring the payment options back up to par with surrounding municipalities.

### **Tomorrow's Budget Meeting**

The proposed draft results in a 15.5% increase to residents. I appreciate Paul's sentiment that this is unacceptable, as it aligns with a number of other residents including myself. Many residents who have joined grand valley in the last 4-5 years have already experienced more than 30% increase on property taxes. To add another 15% is not sustainable YoY growth for residents to fund. I hope our council members agree this is not acceptable and will work with us to find a path forward for all.

After reviewing the draft and summary of the amount required to reduce the tax rate increase to a more reasonable 5-7%, I would like to recommend the following options for your consideration (I know you don't have to do anything with this information, but if it's helpful during discussions

tomorrow that would make me happy. If these recommendations are not feasible, please let us know what options within the draft are negotiable.)

- Defer hiring the new administrative role (this is the HC I referred to in my post): \$100,000
- Reduce or phase in IT upgrades: \$50,000
  - o Note that the draft has no mention of impact phasing would cause. So this should be considered
- Adjust Cost of Living adjustment from 2.7% to 1.5%: ~\$150,000
- Reduce economic development placeholder: \$3,000 (from \$6,000 to \$3,000)
- Reduce road patrol frequency during lower-risk seasons (spring/summer): \$75,000 savings on software licensing and staff time
- Accelerate ministry consultation to reduce ongoing monitoring requirements, potentially saving \$100,000
- Potential option: Negotiate the library board to offset a portion of the increase using library reserves or alternate funding : \$25,000 (unclear if this is feasible)

Potential Savings total: \$503,000

- Another option, but one that I'm not inclined to suggest is to delay any non-critical maintenance of public works vehicles as this may result in further savings of up to \$80,000, but I believe this to be risky given the need the town has for these vehicles, especially during winter months. The draft already makes mention of leveraging finance options for the snow plow, but if additional vehicle or equipment costs could be financed on a 5-year term, this would also support additional savings.

Additional questions I have:

How much influence is there on the Conservation Authority portion of the budget? This is also increasing, but is there opportunity for the town to push back on any of it, or not really?

Thank you so much for listening!

While I can't make the meeting tomorrow, I will do my best to watch the recording, but if you're willing to reach out and let me know how it goes, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you,  
**Maggie Bobinski**

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Dear Council,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing as a concerned resident of our town to express my worries and seek clarification about the recent substantial increase in taxes.

While I understand that our community is growing and that there are various projects and developments planned for the future, I am concerned about the immediate financial impact this tax increase will have on many of us. The decision to significantly raise taxes has caused quite a bit of anxiety among residents, especially those with fixed or limited incomes.

I acknowledge the necessity of maintaining and improving our town's infrastructure, such as the purchase of new fire trucks, bridge repairs, and the construction of new facilities. However, I wonder if there might be alternative ways to spread out these costs over several years to lessen

the burden on residents. Could we explore additional funding sources or phased approaches to these projects?

Moreover, with the influx of new homes and the associated increase in tax revenue, I am curious about how these new funds are being allocated. It would be helpful for residents to understand how these additional taxes are being used to support our town's growth and development.

I also believe that attracting larger businesses to our town could help distribute the tax burden more evenly and provide additional revenue streams. Has the council considered actively seeking out such opportunities to alleviate the financial pressure on individual taxpayers?

**\*\*Additionally, I must express my concern regarding the recent change in the Pre-Authorized Payment (PAP) plan from a 12-month to a 10-month schedule. The notice given to residents for this change was extremely short, leaving many of us unprepared for the financial adjustments required. More transparent communication and adequate notice periods are essential to ensure residents can plan their finances accordingly and avoid undue stress.\*\***

I sincerely appreciate the hard work and dedication of the town council and staff in planning for our future. However, I hope that you can take these concerns into consideration and provide some clarity and possible alternatives for managing our town's financial needs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Best regards,  
Ashley Lush

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Hello,

I live on Concession Road 6-7, northwest of Grand Valley. I heard about the recent proposed property tax increase of 15.5%. I am opposed to this increase, and I prefer that the council make the necessary cuts to the budget to bring the increase down to approximately the current rate of inflation.

Take care,  
Heather Clinch

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**Good day,**

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Additional questions I have:

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Thank you so much for listening!

Thank you,

**Kristina Zapletal**

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Good afternoon,

I just read a memo indicating a proposed 15 plus percentage increase to our 2025 taxes. Since 2016, our taxes have increased from approximately \$4500.00 to over \$6,000. We still have zero services. We still have to travel outside of grand valley for every single thing we need including all major grocery shopping. Even if I needed helium filled balloons for a kids birthday party, I need to travel to Orangeville. When we moved here in 2016, we were promised services that still hasn't made its way here almost 10 years later.

Where has all our tax dollars gone? Most activities are run by volunteers and are not put on by the town. We are nowhere close to getting a swimming pool (another commute to Orangeville or Fergus), we do not have a proper grocery store, dollar store and most businesses here close at 7 or 8pm when people are getting in to town from commuting to the city.

People cannot afford such an increase giving the fact that we need to commute for everything (jobs included). The commute cost money for gas and wear and tear on our vehicles.

The town needs to get the builder to provide services for the residents. Even the parks that are built are not suitable for kids older than 4.

While I understand it cost money to service the town, I haven't seen where our taxes are going. We didn't need another baseball diamond (that money could have been used to build a proper park for all the kids in town) or 3 dental offices or 2/3 Marijuana shops.

Thank you,  
Shanika

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Dear Town of Grand Valley

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my growing concern about the recent and ongoing increase in property taxes within Grand Valley. As a resident, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore how these escalating costs are putting a significant financial strain on homeowners and renters alike.

While we all understand that taxes are necessary to fund essential services, it is becoming harder to justify the level of these increases, especially when we consider the limited services and infrastructure improvements the community receives in return. Many of us feel that we are not getting the value we should for the amount we are being taxed. This imbalance is not only frustrating but is also creating an environment where long-time residents are being priced out of the area.

The rising property taxes are reaching a point where they will soon force many people—families, retirees, and young professionals—to leave Grand Valley. It's becoming clear that for many, the cost of living here is simply unsustainable. This could have serious long-term consequences, not only for individual households but for the community as a whole. The diversity and vibrancy that make Grand Valley unique will be at risk if these costs continue to rise unchecked.

I ask that you take these concerns seriously and work towards a solution that ensures our community remains affordable and sustainable for everyone, not just those with higher incomes. It is crucial that we find a balance between necessary funding and the needs of the people who live here.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that together, we can make Grand Valley a place where everyone can continue to live and thrive.

Sincerely,  
Resident of Grand Valley (Adam W)

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Hello

Why have are taxes increased so much in 1 year? The taxes to live in this small town are crazy.

Thxs  
Rob Shumilak

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Good morning ,

I'm writing this email to express my displeasure in relation to the significant rise in property tax for the residence of Grand Valley.

I grew up in a city, moved to a small town where I resided for 16 years. The amenities, upkeep, activities and opportunities were far more significant than what Grand Valley has provided.

Upon relocating here for work and family reasons, I was excited to be a part of this small, growing community.

The significant tax increase with minimal improvements from a resident's perspective is outrageous.

My property Value has not increased since the day I moved in, yet the taxes have been raised significantly. Other residents in the community who have resided here for years are experiencing the same issues with constant tax hikes and little to nothing to show for it. I can't comprehend the tangible benefit behind the increase, resulting in a consideration to move from this town- which I call home.

Our public parks get landscaping once a month, garbage sits outside the public garbage cans, the downtown core appears as if we're in the 1970's, and our emergency services are under equipped. There is one public school in the area, a rundown arena, and the sidewalk snow removal doesn't plow our sidewalk. Although we're expecting the ball diamond to be used this spring, it's sat unused for quite some time.

The unpredictability which the town has demonstrated with the consistent increase of property taxes makes me worry that it will continue to increase. Currently , Homes are having a hard time selling within this community and the property tax increase only adds to the issue.

While I have reviewed documents provided by the town, I would request the town council spend a bit more effort making genuine efforts to refrain from these outrageous tax increases. Perhaps lean on the residence of the town to volunteer their services and expertise when it comes to conducting renovations or upkeep on infrastructure. There are plenty of tradesman who may be happy to give back to the community (not entirely sure the tax implications- however possible tax deduction for their services?)

In essence, the frustration comes from the idea that a steep tax increase, with no visible improvements to offset it, feels unfair and burdensome to property owners.

I'm proud to be a resident of Grand Valley, however I'm sincerely disappointed with the decision to increase the taxes.

Regards,  
Josh

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Good day,

At this time I wish to voice my concerns regarding a proposed tax hike of 15.5%. Given that the town has little to offer its residents, what is the reasoning for this large hike? Many people in the province are suffering (economically), possibly some live here. Can you imagine what this proposed increase will do to some people? I've lived here for 9 years, have reviewed your website, not really much offered for this kind of increase.

Is this town not wanting to attract people, business? You've got a resident stating that in 6 years, her taxes have increased 30%!!

I plan on moving in the very near future. But, this town is the most money hungry place I've ever lived.

Yours,  
Debra McFarlane

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