

Public Questions

2025 Municipal Budget and Pre-Authorized Tax Payment Changes

I thank Council for the opportunity to sit in on the budget meeting last week and during the 3-1/2hrs made several notes. I applaud Council for the monumental task they have in trying to please everyone and yet still get things done in Town.

I'm hoping to have this email directed to Council to address several points of concern and ideas that I have mentioned and look forward to hopefully hearing back on this topic. I do intend to attend the next meeting on Feb25, as well.

Violet Bromley

JAN28/2025 TGV BUDGET MEETING NOTES

- Several of the capital expenditures are being financed through reserve accounts and therefore are not adding to the rate payer's costs

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER OR REVIEW

- Last year expenses were incurred to equip the council chambers with cameras, speakers and the ability to live stream and record meetings for the public's access
 - What was the cost of all of this?
 - How many residents are actually logging in to livestream?
 - How many residents are actually viewing recordings?
 - What was the cost per resident for all of this and is it worth it?
- Has the asset management module been moved to another service provider other than RJ Burnside, that was discussed several years ago but I don't think it was completed, to provide more detailed information for reporting purposes
 - what is the actual cost per year for asset management practices; software, staff time, etc.
 - we understand that this is a government requirement for all municipalities to comply with and another deadline for reporting is Jul01/2025; will we be compliant?
- Crosswalk Downtown
 - Estimated cost of \$90,000 plus loss of 4 parking spots
 - No matter where it is located it will be in the wrong place
 - People will still cross the road wherever they park and where it is most convenient for them ; they won't traverse north or south just to use the cross walk unless it is right in front of them
- Updated Gateway Signage
 - Is it really necessary this year with all of the other big expenses?
- Hilltown Subdivision

- \$2m loan to develop property into 24 lots; is this a wise use of funds?
- Employment Lands
 - Where do we stand with developing of employment lands?
 - Would it not be more beneficial to take the \$2m loan to develop that?
 - 2024 Res tax rate = 1.341355
 - 2024 Ind tax rate = 2.329793
 - 2024 Com tax rate = 3.492480
 - The return on investment would be much better realized to develop the employment lands because then we can earn much higher tax rates, which in turn help to cover the TGV's annual expenses so that the residents don't have to carry the full weight

VARIOUS EXPENSE SECTIONS

- Administration/Treasury
 - Significant capital expense due to required computer hardware & software upgrades to improve cyber security
- Downtown Improvement
 - This covers downtown flowers & wages to maintain
 - Has the TGV applied for student grant and/or utilizing student help for this versus regular staff wages, which are much higher
- Canine Control
 - It was revealed that dog tag license revenue is not enough to cover this contract cost
 - Why has the dog tag revenue gone down so much when it used to cover the annual costs
 - Is it because it is now processed through a 3rd party instead of in house?
 - When it was processed in house and residents didn't pay we were able the amount to the their taxes and be guaranteed the revenue
- West Back Alley (where the EV chargers are located in the municipal parking lot)
 - 2 of the 4 chargers are not working and require either repair and/or replacement
 - Why is this hydro being offered free of charge? It should be a user pay system to cover expenses annually
 - It has been observed that residents are parking and using the chargers in the evening and walking to and/from their homes to get free hydro!
 - There are also 2 chargers at the Community Centre that were installed by Dufferin County
 - Are these also free?

- Post a sign in the west back alley for users to go to the community centre chargers instead
- Community Centre
 - Expansion work is being completed through grants and municipal agreements with EG & AM
 - Levy rate per resident has not increased but since the proportion of GV residents is now higher the levy is also higher
 - Has a review been completed to determine whether the hiring of extra staff has provided a positive return on investment?

- Bylaw Enforcement
 - Has a review been completed to determine whether the hiring of staff has provided a positive return on investment?
 - Any feedback from residents?
 - It was noted in earlier meeting minutes that Bylaw was going to conduct a door to door dog licensing program
 - This would also help with the dog tag license revenue
- Mill Street/The Door Facility
 - Requires rehab at an expense, approx. \$10,000
 - are there grant options for this or other possible uses
- Policing Contract (serviced by Dufferin OPP)
 - Is a major expense to rate payers
 - 2025 contract costs = \$552,000 based on historical # of calls from GV and other factors
 - This amount is reduced by \$91,000 due to provincial savings plan implanted for 2025
- Automated Speed Enforcement Camera (by the School)
 - Will be going live first week of Feb
 - Costs estimated to be covered by revenues
- Parks & Recreation
 - It was mentioned during the Jan28 meeting that this section also includes Splash Pad expenses; however there is a separate section in the budget for Splash Pad so this needs to be corrected and/or verified
 - new ball diamonds on 2nd Concession/Amaranth St West estimated revenues to help offset expenses
 - this new sports accommodation needs to be included on Town's website so that residents are aware and can book

- Trails
 - New expense section as the TGV assumed the trails last year
- Campground (Amaranth St East)
 - Used to be operated by Lions Club but TGV assumed this responsibility a few years ago, although they do not own the land (Conservation Authority does)
 - \$12,000 of repairs were put into the park last year, plus regular maintenance and upkeep
 - Revenue is far from covering expenses
 - If it is to be continued use as a campground then expenses should be covered by rentals, as a true user pay system, without falling on rate payers
 - Could this property be repurposed for other use? Possibly dog park?
 - Planner Mark to review this for the next meeting
- Community Park Development (Amaranth St West)
 - More planning and design work in 2025 for additional fields and/or services, such as a pavilion
 - Lights were installed last fall for extended usage
 - Lets get some revenue generated to help offset costs and see just how many groups/people are going to use this area before more expenses are incurred
 - an analysis of return on investment per rate payer should be established
- Bridges & Culverts
 - Bridge #10 loan to be paid off
 - Bridge #7 requires structural engineering plan & design work
 - It was suggested during the meeting that we know it needs to be replaced so lets skip this step and go straight to the replacement plan
- Grass Mowing
 - 2025 expense increase of approx. \$40,000
 - Could students be hired for some of this work
 - Is it cheaper to outsource versus utilizing existing staff (noting that extra staff were hired by parks & rec)
- Brush/Tree Trimming
 - Several trees were taken down last year (I believe along the trailway, but not sure) and the estimated cost to mulch them is \$30,000; is this really necessary or can we let nature take its course to rot them
- Storm Sewers & Storm Water Mgmt. Ponds
 - Costing about \$30,000 to manage these ponds annually
 - Can the developer help with these costs? Why did the Town engineers sign off on the TGV's assumption of these? Was it too soon?

- Line Painting
 - Expense expected to increase approx. \$20,000 for more line painting
 - Is this necessary? Can this be maintained at the same level as last year?
- Gravel Expense
 - This expense was reduced by approx. \$70,000
 - We are required to supply gravel this year for the East West Luther Townline in conjunction with Wellington as it is a shared responsibility road
- Safety Devices & Signage
 - Existing speed signs require replacement @ approx. \$5000/ea.
 - Also includes expenses for speed humps & maintenance
 - Some discussion was had about bolsters versus speed humps
- Roads Dept Overhead
 - It was mentioned at the meeting that this section includes roads staff overtime costs, however these should be allocated to the appropriate expense section to determine true costs (i.e.: snow plowing overtime should be noted in that section, etc.)
 - This is to be reviewed in more detail at the next meeting
 - Includes engineering design of North Shop expansion, approx. \$60,000 as well as approx. \$50,000 for Urban Shop upgrades
 - I believe these costs will be covered by reserves
 - Public works also requires a dedicated radio channel
 - They are currently sharing with 4 other municipalities and its very confusing at times and vital information could be missed
- 2024 Freightliner Snow Plow
 - Was purchased last year
 - Some discussion was had at the meeting regarding the age of TGV fleet and it is adequate and in good standing
 - Planning should be established for fleet replacement by setting some funds into reserve each year on a scheduled basis, to be determined
- Locates
 - Required to comply by legislation when Ontario One Call is received and municipality cannot recoup costs unfortunately
 - Budget was doubled for 2025 but unsure why; reduce by \$10,000?
- Infiltration Sewer Project
 - The Town's Waste Water Treatment Plant is designed to handle waste water that needs to be cleaned before being discharged into the Grand River. Storm water and clean household water does not need to be cleaned and therefore should not be sent to the Treatment Plant for processing. When

inflow and infiltration occurs, extra water is introduced into the Town's sewer network, and the whole waste water treatment system is pushed to meet the demand for treatment.

- This is an ongoing annual project to investigate where extra infiltration is coming from and get it rectified
- Annual budget approx. \$50,000
- Medical Centre
 - The Board (shared responsibility by Amaranth, East Garafraxa & TGV) was dissolved and TGV has assumed responsibility for the property & operations
 - Tenant rental revenue to cover all expenses
 - Tenants to be responsible for all repair & maintenance
 - Any excess revenue to be put into reserves for improvements, etc.
- BIA (Business Improvement Area, downtown)
 - TGV collects levy from all businesses annually and this makes up the BIA's annual budget, approx. \$7600
 - It was mentioned during the meeting that BIA requested funds for fireworks but then what was their budget used for?
 - The 2023 financials indicate surplus revenue of \$3500; where does this stand for 2024? and for 2025?
- Library
 - Levy rate per resident has not increased but since the proportion of GV residents is now higher the levy is also higher
- Hilltown Subdivision
 - A Town initiated Zoning By-law Amendment to permit reduced lot sizes, reduced lot coverage and maximum dwelling size to permit a residential subdivision on private services
 - TGV is taking out a \$2m loan to develop this property, located at Sdrd 21-22 & County Rd 15, to create 24 lots for residential use
 - Is this a wise use of funds? Per lot cost = \$83,333 + interest