

Net tax levy at 0.83% following draft budget meeting

By Peter Richardson

Orangeville Council got their first look at the 2022 draft budget on Monday (Nov. 29).

The net tax levy currently sits at 0.83 per cent, which represents a \$310,000 shortfall. The 0.83 per cent figure is much less than the originally anticipated 2.9 per cent increase.

Over 95 per cent of the levy being allocated to essential services.

The Consumer Price Index, which is used to track inflation, is in excess of four per cent this year, making this year's proposed net tax levy of 0.83 per cent quite lower than the increased cost of living for Canadians in 2021.

In total, the proposed capital budget sits at \$59.4 million and the proposed operating budget is \$38.3 million.

During the budget meeting, the Town earned yet another international award, garnering a distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 2021 from the Government Finance Officers Association. The same award was received in 2013 and 2014.

The budget had to meet the criteria of being a financial plan, a policy document an operational guide as well as a communication tool to achieve this award.

Our Finance staff led by Nandini Syed continue to create budget documents that communicate concisely the Town's financial picture. The content and graphic presentation have been acknowledged by their peers, on an international level, said Mayor Sandy Brown.

This was the second year that the budget presentation took place virtually.

Treasurer Nandini Syed presented the 11 links to the budget. This year a new section was presented called "What is a Municipal Budget?"

This will act as a budget primer showing the legislative frameworks, the classification of the budget, budget challenges, the process and the difference between the base budget versus the proposed budget.

The basis of the budget is the Town's Strategic Plan.

The key achievements of the budget are to maintain essential services levels and continue capital planning commitments.

It assures residents that 2022 will be a year of recovery growth and innovation, providing robust servicing capacity for current and future residents, in addition to modernizing aging systems and infrastructure.

The Budget will implement a comprehensive asset management program that will proactively enable data driven decisions and monitor assets to track their lifespan and when they need replacement.

This is meant to position Orangeville to effectively deal with upgrades and replacements to infrastructure in the years ahead.

With the draft capital and operating budgets now having been reviewed by Council, in the coming weeks there will be meetings to approve the finalized versions of those documents.

Council will discuss the Capital Budget on Dec. 13 and the Operating Budget on Dec. 14.

Following the draft budget presentation this past Monday, Mayor Sandy Brown thanked the treasurer, Nadini Syed, and her team for all their hard work. He made note of the award and was certain Council would look forward to discussing the Budget in the coming weeks

With that, the meeting was adjourned.