

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RE: 2008 BUDGET

Council Chambers, Paris
December 13, 2007
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Eddy, Councillors Wheat, Schmitt (8:20 p.m.), Simons, Haggart, Powell, Atfield, Chambers, Hodge, Coleman and Gatward.

Staff: Fiebig, Glassford, Johnston, Underwood, Bell, Kozak-Selby, Mifflin, Gubbels, Staley, Hobin and Carman.

Mayor Eddy in the Chair.

Moved by – Councillor Coleman
Seconded by – Councillor Hodge

That Council now go into Committee of the Whole to consider the 2008 Budget.

. Carried

In response to a question, Mr. Glassford advised that the Provincial announcement today of funding does not affect the budget presentation this evening due to the fact that there is no information available on how the funding will be allocated to municipalities. If the County were successful in receiving funding, these funds could be utilized to reduce the amount of debt for capital expenditures or allow for other capital projects to proceed sooner.

Mr. Glassford briefly reviewed his report on the 2008 budget, noting that \$55,455 in adjustments made at previous budget meetings have been included in the total proposed budget of \$32,052,599. This results in a tax rate increase of 4.92%, taking into consideration updated assessment figures. Mr. Glassford pointed out that he had also listed other items that had been identified at the previous budget meetings for further consideration, noting that the funding request from the Brantford Municipal Airport Commission should be added to the list.

Mr. Glassford also referred to the proposed recommendation that any excess surplus over the \$500,000 budgeted or new revenue sources in 2008 be first applied to the deficit of any capital project that has been completed, and secondly towards the borrowing requirements for approved capital projects. He requested that any additional 2008 capital projects that are added to the budget be funded through an increase to the corporate capital transfer rather than through debt financing. In response to a question, he noted that this would only be possible if the capital project being added is a reasonable cost or it would increase the tax rate too much. Mr. Glassford reviewed a report outlining the County's current debt repayment amount and projections for various options for approved projects over the next five years.

The Director reviewed his report on industrial, commercial and multi-residential tax ratios prepared in response to a request from the Chamber of Commerce Brantford/Brant to reduce these ratios. He noted that the tax ratios, as established by the Province of Ontario, are much higher than the municipal rates. Due to the fact that the 2009 reassessment process will cause a shift from the industrial/commercial/multi-residential classes to the residential classes, Mr. Glassford suggested that a one-time reduction of 10% in the industrial/commercial and multi-residential assessment classes be considered. Approval of this change would result in the residential tax rate increasing from the proposed 4.92% to 5.75%.

In response to a question, Mr. Glassford advised that \$400,000 from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund Reserve has been included in the 2008 budget as a revenue source.

Moved by – Councillor Atfield
Seconded by – Councillor Wheat

That the 2008 budget requiring a property tax levy of \$32,052,599 be approved.

. No Vote – Amendments Follows

The members of the Committee agreed that any item considered during this meeting could be reconsidered later in the meeting without the need for a two-thirds majority to reconsider the matter.

Moved by – Councillor Wheat
Seconded by – Councillor Powell

That the cost of a projector for the Council Chambers at an estimated cost of \$5,000 be included in the 2008 budget.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Atfield
Seconded by – Councillor Hodge

That the proposed costs for laptops and a software application for Council/Committee agendas not be included in the 2008 budget.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Powell
Seconded by – Councillor Haggart

That the request from the Sanderson Centre for a grant of \$25,000 in 2008 be approved.

. No Vote – Amendment Follows

Moved by – Councillor Gatward
Seconded by – Councillor Simons

That the grant for the Sanderson Centre be reduced to \$12,500

. Defeated

Mayor Eddy then called for a vote on the original motion as follows:

“That the request from the Sanderson Centre for a grant of \$25,000 in 2008 be approved.”

. Defeated

Moved by – Councillor Gatward
Seconded by – Councillor Powell

That the request from the Brantford General Hospital for a grant of \$250,000 towards the cost of the MRI equipment be denied.

. Carried

It was agreed that the request from the BGH for MRI funding would be referred for reconsideration later in the meeting. Councillor Powell offered to investigate if there are Willett Foundation funds available for use towards the cost of the MRI.

Moved by – Councillor Wheat
Seconded by – Councillor Atfield

That the request from the Task Force on Seniors Issues and the Disabled for \$2,500 for shelving be denied.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Gatward
Seconded by – Councillor Powell

That the request from the Brant Culture Centre for funding of \$24,000 in 2008 for the Rural Economic Development (RED) Partnership project be denied.

. Carried

In response to a question, the Director of Corporate Services advised that the Brant Cultural Centre has already received a New Horizons grant for seniors programming that is separate from the RED program.

Members of the Committee discussed the proposal from the Brant Cultural Centre for capital funding in 2008. There was a suggestion that the money be allocated for the 2009 capital budget to show support for the project, and allow an opportunity for reconsideration of the amount in 2009.

Moved by – Councillor Atfield
Seconded by – Councillor Gatward

That the funding partner request from the Brant Cultural Centre for capital funding in 2008 be denied.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Coleman
Seconded by – Councillor Simons

That an additional amount of \$100,000 be included in the 2008 operating budget for road resurfacing.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Gatward
Seconded by – Councillor Powell

That the \$74,000 cost for the organics collection pilot project be removed from the 2008 budget and this amount be allocated towards the cost of a bulk pick-up.

. Defeated

Moved by – Councillor Wheat
Seconded by – Councillor Hodge

That the recommendation from the Public Works Committee to negotiate the reinstatement of double-sided garbage pickup be approved, at an estimated cost of \$350,000.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Coleman
Seconded by – Councillor Gatward

That the recommendation from the Public Works Committee to include the costs for Phase 1 of extending water services to Campbell Farm Road, at an estimated cost of \$50,000, be approved, it being understood that this amount will be recovered from the benefiting properties.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Atfield
Seconded by – Councillor Wheat

That a tax rebate for heritage properties not be approved for 2008.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Haggart
Seconded by – Councillor Chambers

That the request from the Chamber of Commerce Brantford/Brant to reduce the tax ratios for industrial, commercial and multi-residential assessment classes in 2008 be denied.

. Carried

It was requested that a copy of the Treasurer's report on tax ratios be forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce for their information.

Moved by – Councillor Wheat
Seconded by – Councillor Coleman

That the water consumption charges be increased by 17% instead of 15% in 2008.

. Carried

Mr. Glassford advised that although the City has not provided a specific amount for a grant towards the Brantford Municipal Airport, in the past they have suggested that the property taxes be waived, which are approximately \$42,000. Councillor Schmitt updated Council on current Airport initiatives.

Moved by – Councillor Chambers
Seconded by – Councillor Coleman

That the request from the Brantford Airport Commission to waive the property taxes for the Brantford Municipal Airport be denied.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Gatward
Seconded by – Councillor Simons

That the costs for an Tipping Fee Amnesty Day, at an estimated cost of \$31,090, be included in the 2008 budget.

. Defeated

The meeting recessed at 9:50 p.m. and reconvened at 10:00 p.m.

Mr. Glassford reviewed that as a result of deliberations this evening, three items were added to the 2008 operating budget, at a total cost of \$455,000. This results in a total budget of \$32,507,599 or a tax increase of 6.08%. This results in a \$146.27 tax increase on an average residential unit assessed at \$211,000.

Moved by – Councillor Coleman
Seconded by – Councillor Schmitt

That a grant of \$250,000 to the Brant Community Healthcare System for the MRI project, to be paid in equal instalments over the next four years, be approved, on the basis that funding in each of these years is contingent on proof from the Brant Community Healthcare System that the fund-raising goal for the MRI project has not been met.

. No Vote – Amendment Follows

Moved by – Councillor Haggart
Seconded by – Councillor Simons

That the grant for the MRI be reduced to \$70,000 for 2008;

And that the Brant Community Healthcare System apply in subsequent years for additional funding if required for the MRI project.

. Defeated

Mayor Eddy then called for a vote on the original motion, as follows:
“That a grant of \$250,000 to the Brant Community Healthcare System for the MRI project, to be paid in equal instalments over the next four years, be approved, on the basis that funding in each of these years is contingent on proof from the Brant Community Healthcare System that the fund-raising goal for the MRI project has not been met.”

. Carried

Members of the Committee discussed the proposed addition to the South Dumfries Community that is included in the 2008 capital budget. It was noted that \$550,000 was included in the 2007 budget for the main floor addition for additional dressing rooms, etc. Mr. Glassford clarified that the \$1,109,460 net amount included in the 2008 capital budget included the second floor addition, plus additional space for the customer service office and the community policing office, less revenue received from the St. George Lions and from sale of the municipal building at 5 Main Street North.

Moved by – Councillor Simons
 Seconded by – Councillor Atfield

That the capital project for the South Dumfries Community Centre in the gross amount of \$1,459,460 be removed from the 2008 capital budget due to the following reasons:

1. The costs have increased due to the increased size, with the St. George Lions proposing \$100,000, along with a loan of \$220,000 (from the County) payable at \$20,000 per year for 11 years. The additional cost of approximately \$889,000 would be borne by the taxpayers in long-term debt.
 The original project consisted of three dressing rooms, 2 offices, community meeting room and a mechanical room, which was in the approved budget in 2007 for \$550,000.
2. To date, no Engineer’s Study has been forwarded to this Council, therefore many additional unforeseen costs could arise at the time of construction, thus increasing the above figures.
3. We also have a letter with several signatures from the St. George community stating they wish to only proceed with the original addition as stated above.
4. Due to our debt capacity at present, as a Council, we need to be very conscious of our necessary needs compared to the wants that have been illustrated.

	<u>Recorded Vote</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Councillor Atfield	1	
Councillor Chambers		1
Councillor Hodge		1
Councillor Coleman		1
Councillor Gatward	1	
Mayor Eddy		1
Councillor Wheat		1
Councillor Schmitt		1
Councillor Simons	1	
Councillor Haggart		1
Councillor Powell	<u>1</u>	
Defeated	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>

Moved by – Councillor Chambers
 Seconded by – Councillor Coleman

That any additional surplus or unidentified revenues in excess of \$50,000 that is not included in the 2008 budget be applied to any deficit for completed capital projects and secondly to the borrowing requirements for approved capital projects;

And that should additional 2008 capital projects for general municipal purposes be approved, funding be provided by way of an increase to the corporate capital transfer.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Chambers
Seconded by – Councillor Coleman

That the 2008 budget, as amended, requiring a property tax levy of \$32,570,099 be approved.

. Carried

Moved by – Councillor Chambers
Seconded by – Councillor Gatward

That County staff be directed to review the 2008 operating budget and provide alternatives to Council prior to final approval of the budget to reduce costs to lower the tax rate increase of 6.24% for 2008.

. Carried

Councillor Coleman requested that staff provide information on tax rate increases over the last five years.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. The In Camera meeting regarding a personal matter about identified individuals has been rescheduled to 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 19 prior to the Planning Advisory Committee meeting.

Moved by – Councillor Coleman
Seconded by – Councillor Hodge

That Committee of the Whole resume in open session of Council.

. Carried

NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Secretary