



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
“SPECIAL” MINUTES**

Tuesday, October 29th, 2024

5:30 p.m.

**Tay Valley Municipal Office – 217 Harper Road, Perth, Ontario
Council Chambers**

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present: Chair, Councillor Marilyn Thomas
Reeve Rob Rainer
Deputy Reeve Fred Dobbie
Councillor Wayne Baker
Councillor Greg Hallam
Councillor Korrine Jordan
Councillor Keith Kerr
Councillor Angela Pierman

Staff Present: Amanda Mabo, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk
Aaron Watt, Deputy Clerk
Sean Ervin, Public Works Manager
Ashley Liznick, Treasurer
Noelle Reeve, Planner

Regrets: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.
A quorum was present.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND/OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST
AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF**

None at this time.

3. DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

i) **2025 Preliminary Budget Summary Presentation.**

The Treasurer presented the PowerPoint presentation as attached to the Agenda.

The Treasurer explained that the draft budget as presented with an 11.46% increase to the levy is a result of increased costs to the Township occurring throughout 2024. These increases, combined with goals of providing the same services at the same service levels as last year, resulted in a higher percentage than expected.

ii) **2025 Operating Budget Presentation and Discussion.**

The Treasurer presented the PowerPoint presentation as attached to the Agenda.

- **Budget Impacts on Levy**

The increase is result of a 3.21% increase in the Ontario Provincial Police Contract costs, a Township Operational cost increase of 7.3% and a Reserve/Capital Increase of 0.95%.

The largest factors driving the 11.46% rate are

- a 6.36% increase due to salaries & benefits changes as result of the Pay Equity and Compensation Review, and
- a 3.21% increase due to the OPP costing change

These items alone represent a levy increase of 9.57%.

The Treasurer notes that staff have diligently worked to lessen any additional impact brought to the levy, recognizing that further reductions could mean changes or reductions in services, or changes in external support and donations.

- **New Initiatives for Council Consideration**

The Committee, recognizing that the operating budget was already proposing an 11.46% levy increase, carefully considered each proposed new initiative.

Recreation Casual Position

The Treasurer and Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk explained that this position is being brought forward from the 2024 Draft Budget. The Committee discussed the occupational factors that accounted for the need and the related staffing costs of the position. Public Works staff currently

undertake the duties of this position. The financial implications of both scenarios were considered.

A correction was noted. The \$11,745 for this position should have been \$5,700.

The Committee agreed to proceed with adding additional hours to this position.

Additional Positions

The Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk addressed the need for additional staff in the Corporate and Finance Departments. Citing the examples of large tasks, such as asset management and budget creation, along with the impact of growth and changes to services within the Township, staff are at workload capacity.

These positions are not being sought in this Budget, but they will be brought forward for Council consideration in future budgets.

Fire Compensation Review

The Treasurer explained that the results of the Fire Compensation Review will be available at the November 19th, 2024, meeting and that the final outcome of it could result in an increase for consideration.

Increasing the Library Levy Request

The Committee discussed the increased funding request from the library, including the outcomes of

- Tay Valley Township's proportional increase being just under \$7,000
- increasing a library staff position from four (4) to five (5) days per week
- allowing the library to increase volunteer capacity and increase programming

The Committee enquired how the amount of \$21,000 was reached for an additional day for the Library staff. The Treasurer will enquire and provide an update at the next meeting.

A Member raised the question of redirecting the current donation for the Lanark Highlands Library to the Perth & District Union Library.

The Committee also discussed that the Library needs to look at cutting in other areas, such as programming so that their expenses are not increasing year over year.

The Committee agreed to leave the ask in for now but would discuss again at the next meeting.

Reducing the Library Transfer to Capital Reserves

The Treasurer explained that under the current agreement, the Perth & District Library is to budget 4% of its annual levy to reserves, and that the library has lessened the contribution potentially as a way to combat tight budgets in the past. This was included so that Council was consciously aware that the agreement was not being met.

iii) **2025 Fee Review.**

The Treasurer explained the proposed fee amendments.

The Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk spoke to the “Review of Legal Status/Update to Property Files” item on the Proposed Fee Amendments slide.

This new fee was established based on increasing observation that

- residents often do not want to file a Building or Planning application until they are aware of what other matters are involved
- Township staff are unable to provide that information without doing a full and proper legal search
- a fee and deposit are needed for staff to undertake that task, and currently one does not exist

The Planner explained the following items on the slide, “Part Lot Lift” and “Deeming By-Law”, as new tasks never having been done by the Township before.

During 2024, the Township was required to perform a Part Lot Lift and is aware of the need for a Deeming By-Law as part of a current severance application. Currently there are no fees for either process, adding these items to the Tariff of Fees will fulfill current and future operational needs.

The Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk spoke to the Building Permit Deposit fees, explaining that the Township has seen a sharp increase in law offices not pulling all required legal files and information regarding a property, or not verifying all matters as required. To cover the Township for risk and liability, staff have the responsibility to verify information when an application is filed and there are currently no fees to cover pulling the additional required legal information.

The Committee had questions surrounding campgrounds using Township waste sites for their commercial business, of which most users are not Township residents. At a later date Council would like to discuss fees for campgrounds that use the Township waste sites.

The Committee recessed at 6:59 p.m.

The Committee returned to session at 7:04 p.m.

The Treasurer opened the floor to questions, a Member asked for clarification on the OPP increase, and if another occurrence could happen again.

The Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk explained that part of the reason is the OPP were part of a provincial wage freeze, which was recently removed and adjusted. There was no warning that the increased costs to OPP served municipalities was going to be of this magnitude.

Requests from Outside Agencies (Grants)

The Committee discussed each external request for funding:

- The Table requesting \$5,000, supported
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters requesting \$3,500, supported
- Youth Activity Kommittee (YAK) requesting \$10,000, \$5,000 supported
- Lanark County Community Justice Program requesting \$2,000, supported
- Perth & District Sports Hall of Fame requesting \$350, supported
- ABC Association Hall requesting \$1,500 plus an additional \$3,000, \$1,500 supported
- Maberly Agricultural Society requesting \$2,500, \$1,500 supported

Councillor Hallam declared a pecuniary interest and/or conflict of interest on item 3 iii) 2025 Fee Review regarding the Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital Request as his spouse works for the Hospital Foundation.

Councillor Hallam left the room.

- Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital requesting \$70,000, supported after discussion of whether to provide the entire amount to the Hospital or to the Foundation or to split it between both

Councillor Hallam returned to the room.

- Perth & District Chamber of Commerce requesting \$2,000, not supported at this time although Tay Valley Township will continue to renew its annual membership

The Committee encouraged staff to get the overall levy down to single digits, possibly looking to offset the OPP increase with the contingency reserve. There is also a concern that the reserves are low.

The Treasurer and Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk addressed questions of Members regarding the draft 11.46% levy increase. The Committee was reminded that the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) is yet to come in, the Township is waiting for audited financial statements to be returned, the assessment roll, and the outcome of the Fire Department compensation review is unknown.

The Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk stressed the need to look at dollar number increases to understand the actual impact of the levy increase as

percentages can be difficult to understand in context. The Treasurer explained that at the current levy increase, 11.46% represents an annual increase of \$180.25 based on a property assessment of \$300,000 which considers over 60% of the Township's properties.


- 62% of households are assessed at \$300,000 or less (62% of households will pay the \$180 annual increase or less)
- 82% of households are assessed at \$400,000 or less

Members suggested showing the annual dollar increase, the monthly dollar increase, and the percentage as supporting information in future cost explanation breakdowns, including in the tax bill.

The Treasurer confirmed that the media release announcing the 2025 Budget will be published in December 2024. Members suggested a written narrative to explain the increase, including charts and visual representations. Staff will continue to seek savings and decreases throughout the Budget process until its completion in December 2024.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee adjourned at 8:43 p.m.



Chairperson



Aaron Watt, Deputy Clerk