Preliminary Town tax hike set at 5.9 per cent

Numerous tax levies leave little wiggle room

By CYNTHIA GAMBLE
Staff Writer

Treasurer Ed DeSousa kicked off the 2013 town budget discussions at last night's (Monday) council meeting, seeking direction to proceed with a preliminary budget increase of close to six per cent.

ED DESOUSA

The Town's proposed 5.9 per cent hike (a $22 increase per $100,000 of a home's assesment), combined with a proposed Region increase of 2.7 per cent ($10) and a possible zero per cent education increase means an overall impact on local homeowners' tax bills of 3.3 per cent or $32 (per $100,000 of assessment).

These are preliminary figures and could change when the capital budget discussion gets under way in mid-November and operating budget debate begins in mid-January.

But Town council will not have a lot of room to manoeuvre if considering cuts. More than half the increase is the result of levies to pay for town facilities:

- 1.2%, Fire Services Levy, to pay for new firefighters and pay off the new fire station debt;
- 0.9 %, Special Infrastructure Levy, for infrastructure improvements;
- 0.7%, Library Operating Levy, to help alleviate the dollar impact of opening the new Georgetown library
- 0.5%, Arena Levy, to pay the debt for the arena additions.

The operating base budget increase is only 2.6 per cent—lower than the usual 3 per cent in previous years. The base budget is the amount required to continue the existing operations of the town plus costs previously approved by council. With the exception of firefighters no new staff will be hired, and no programs will be expanded.

DeSousa said in his report to council that several other factors have influenced the budget preparation— the lowest assessment growth in the last ten years (only 0.75%), the need to replenish seriously depleted reserves, and the need to spend an additional $870,000 for employee wages and benefits.

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Congratulations to all winners and thank you to all participants for making this year's raffle a huge success!

Georgetown Bread Basket For more information please call Kevin Flynn

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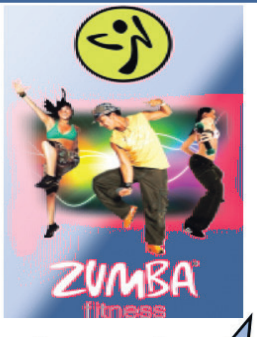

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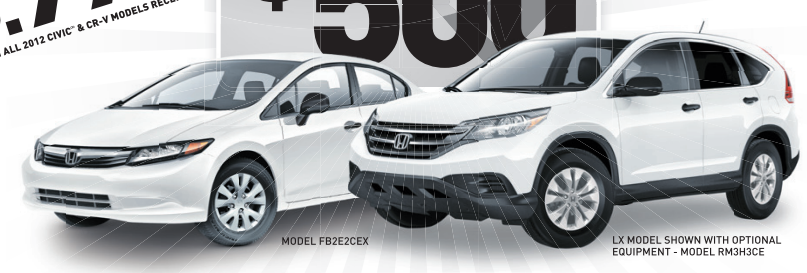

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