

Lack of contribution to reserves worries councillors

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business,” DeSousa remarked.

A staff report to council detailed pressures on the budget, which include an additional \$1.2 million needed for staff compensation adjustments, a seven per cent increase in hydro charges for facilities totalling \$124,400 and an insurance premium hike of \$111,000 due to inflation and higher claims settlements.

The report also discusses the need to replenish the Town’s reserve funds to the tune of \$360,000— a number that hasn’t been included in the budget yet as it would take the tax increase above and beyond the 3.9 per cent guideline.

DeSousa said including the reserve contribution would up the tax increase to 4.8 per cent, which translates into an additional \$12 for the average Halton Hills homeowner.

PROPERTY TAX IMPACT 2016 OPERATING BUDGET (Per \$100,000 of residential assessment)

	2015 Final Budget	2016 Preliminary Budget	\$ Change	% Change
Town	\$374	\$389	\$15	3.9%
Region *	\$318	\$325	\$7	2.3%
Education **	\$203	\$203	\$0	0.0%
Total	\$895	\$917	\$22	2.5%

Notes:

* Proposed Regional Budget (July Budget Direction Report)

** Education rates based on 2015 rates

Graphic courtesy of Town of Halton Hills

Ward 4 Councillor Ann Lawlor raised concerns about leaving the reserve funds out.

“From my perspective, I feel that (contributing to reserves) is really good management,” she said. “I hope we’re able to continue to make some contributions to

those reserve funds.”

The sentiment was shared by others around the table, like Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson and Wards 3 and 4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal.

“I think it’s a mistake. We cut it back last year, and then this

year we’re going to zero. That’s not good,” said Fogal. “Personally I would set it (the levy increase) higher to meet our long-range financial plans.”

Halton Hills CAO Brent Marshall assured council that senior staff will be taking a close look at the issue and addressing it as budget preparations move forward.

“We believe we have an opportunity to do something about the lack of contributions to various reserves,” he said. “We’re being very diligent about this. We’re being very serious about this.”

Staff also briefly outlined details of the 2016-2025 capital budget and forecast, which projects a \$12 million budget for next year and approximately \$15 million per year thereafter. While the operating budget covers service delivery, the capital budget funds the cost of building and renewing municipal

facilities and infrastructure. Reserves are a major source of funding for capital projects, along with development charges.

The budget will be back on the table for the budget committee and council’s consideration in November and December.

Residents can delegate to the budget review committee on two days— November 11 for the capital budget and December 7 for the operating budget. Once ready, the budget documents will be available for viewing at the library or through the Town finance department.

Council will consider the capital budget at its Nov. 30 meeting and the operating budget at its Dec. 14 session.

After both budgets are approved by council, summary information will be available at www.haltonhills.ca.

Halton raises growth-related issues at AMO

By Julia Le
Metroland Media Group

Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr and members of Regional and local councils met with provincial leaders last week to discuss critical issues impacting Halton Region.

The discussions, which took place at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) annual conference in Niagara Falls, from Aug. 16-19, highlighted the significant challenges Halton Region faces with the mandated growth targets set out in the Provinces Places to Grow Act.

“We continue to emphasize to provincial leaders the pressing need to find solutions to ensure the Region can meet

growth targets,” said Carr in a press release. “Halton is mandated to grow to 780,000 by the year 2031, which means the Region needs long-term funding and legislative tools to ensure that taxpayers are not responsible for the financial impacts of growth.”

Carr, along with Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, Oakville Mayor Rob Burton, Burlington Mayor Rick Goldring, Milton Mayor Gordon Krantz and a number of Regional and local councillors met with Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Ted McMeekin, to discuss the need to create affordable housing solutions and conformity with provincial growth legislation.

They also met with:

- Education Minister Liz Sandals to

discuss the need for long-term funding to support new schools;

- Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca to discuss Halton’s community infrastructure needs including GO train service in Milton and Halton Hills;

- Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and Burlington MPP Eleanor McMahon to discuss Conservation Authority funding and aggregate resources legislation;

- Attorney General Madeleine Meilleur to discuss Halton’s immediate need for a new courthouse in Milton; and

- Environment and Climate Change Minister Glen Murray to discuss waste management legislation and adapting and responding to climate change.



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