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County tags wet waste for fee hike: from \$2 to \$2.75

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Northumberland County news

There hasn't been an increase in bag tag fees since 2004, but the 2008 Northumberland County budget is planning on bringing in \$170,000 more in the last eight months of 2008 by increasing the garbage tags from \$2 each to \$2.75, treasurer Mike Buchanan told county March 19.

Bag tags were set up to cover the cost of collection of wet waste and recycling, but not the cost of disposal, he says.

2007 waste management costs totaled more than \$8.6-million, with bag tag revenues covering only \$1.84-million. Grants and other revenues contributed \$4.08-mil-

lion for a net cost of \$2.7-million added to the 2007 levy, he reported.

Collection costs are expected to rise by approximately \$280,000 this year, so in order to cover some of the increase, tipping fees would go up from \$85 per tonne to \$95 and bag tags up 75 cents.

Mr. Buchanan presented council with several options, with the preferred option being an increase of 75 cents that would cover collection costs plus disposal costs at \$30 a tonne.

"This moves us closer to a true user pay system," said Mr. Buchanan. "But there is

a potential for an increase in roadside dumping."

"I always support user pay," said councillor Peter Delanty. "But, about only one-third of the waste budget is covered by the user pay."

Councillor Mark Lovshin (Hamilton Township) suggested cutting back the bulky waste vouchers as the cost to the county is about \$180,000, with a further \$180,000 to lower tier taxpayers.

"I would like to see the bulky waste vouchers removed," Mr. Lovshin said.

He also suggested a change in collection

schedule.

"We could consider collecting wet waste and compost one week and wet waste and recycling alternate weeks," the treasurer said.

The bulky waste vouchers are a hit in Alnwick/Haldimand and it would be a shame to remove "one of the best programs we've got", Councillor Bill Finley (Alnwick/Haldimand) said.

Education is key Councillor Linda Thompson Port Hope said, suggesting spending "a lot of time and effort" on educating the public on waste issues.

The motion passed by council approved an increase in bag tag fees to \$2.75, resulting in a .49 per cent decrease in the tax levy.