

Budget

Halton Hills Budget breakdown

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS 1974 REVENUES	
TAXATION	5,509,006
FINANCE	2,198,179
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	24,500
FIRE AREA No. 1	
FIRE AREA No. 2	1,500
PROTECTIVE INSPECTIONS	26,500
STREET LIGHTING	
AMBULANCE	8,500
ENGINEERING	
Maintenance Subsidy	214,030
Construction Subsidy	180,000
Supplementary Subsidy	118,200
Traffic Control	4,000
	516,230
RECREATION	
General	12,000
Acton Arena	93,275
Georgetown Arena	51,800
Georgetown Pool (old)	10,300
Acton Pool (lake)	4,470
Acton Pool (indoor)	5,690
Community Centres	5,825
Programs	11,295
Parks	500
Playgrounds	
	195,105
LIBRARY	52,000
CEMETERIES	23,100
	8,553,590
EXPENDITURES	
TAXATION	30,000
FINANCE	4,972,264
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	
Council	156,000
Clerks	106,710
Planning	80,148
Property and Maintenance	7,260
Finance	360,370
Property and Maintenance	17,212
	707,890
FIRE AREA No. 1	77,800
FIRE AREA No. 2	101,850
PROTECTIVE INSPECTIONS	91,415
STREET LIGHTING	77,500
AMBULANCE	10,000
ENGINEERING	
Roads - Non Subsidy	159,200
Roads - Maintenance Subsidy	591,150
Roads - Capital Subsidy	731,344
Engineering Department	251,976
Property and Maintenance	33,276
Traffic Control	8,500
Garbage Collection	127,000
	1,902,444
RECREATION	
General	85,572
Georgetown Arena	123,490
Acton Arena	91,819
Georgetown Pool (old)	23,032
Acton Pool (lake)	5,906
Acton Pool (indoor)	7,555
Community Centres	26,040
Programs	32,585
Parks	250
Playgrounds	70,510
	446,569
LIBRARIES	112,958
CEMETERIES	23,100
	8,553,590

*Includes Equipment Services Contracts, Insurance and Telephone Costs for all main Departments

Start-up grants centre of council controversy

The big controversy at Thursday's budget meeting of Halton Hills council concerned the disposition of \$100,000 in start-up grants supplied to the municipality by the province. The town asked for \$300,000 but the province forked over only \$100,000.



Len Cox

Two councillors, Len Cox and Dick Howitt argued it should be used to reduce the mill rate increase for Ward 2 shown in the budget, neatly dressed up in businesslike folders and passed to council and press.

Others, including Councillor Harry Levy, felt the amount should go into the town's working fund which had \$100,000 allotted.

However, after much discussion, council voted for a compromise solution—one mill of the \$100,000 would go to reduce the mill rate and the remainder about \$83,000, was tabbed for the working fund.

Councillor Harry Levy argued that the province was aware of the second and third years of regional government would be hardest for the municipalities, with decreasing grants from the province and increasing costs, especially in recreation. He felt the town would benefit most by having the amount all in the working fund.

Coxe argued that Bill 151 was responsible for many of Ward 2's troubles but felt council had two chances to reduce the bill's effect: (1) by using Esqueusing's surplus to reduce the tax burden in the former township and (2) allocating the start-up grants for the same purpose. He noted the first opportunity had been lost but council could partially recompense by granting the second. Coxe reasoned Ward 2 faced even greater financial burdens next year, perhaps as high as 20 mills.

To Levy, however, that was

more reason to put the entire start-up grant into the working fund.

Councillor Ric Morrow, chairman of the region's finance committee, pointed out the complete transitional grant from the province was used to reduce the Esqueusing mill rate and he felt using the start-up grants for the same purpose or putting the money in a reserve fund amounted to the same thing. However, he commented, it was an easy political move to cut the taxes and one day the people of Ward 2 would have to face the extra cost. To use it for reducing the mill rate would be a false reduction, he said.

Councillor Pat McKenzie said he favored using one mill of the start-up grants to reduce the tax burden. He also felt increased assessment would balance the books in years to come, an opinion challenged by Councillor Coxe. Morrow pointed out the region does not want to let North Halton grow and in his opinion this doomed Halton Hills to exist on government grants.

For Harry Levy increased assessment also meant increased expenses and he was the lone opponent who voted against a compromise motion which favored using the start-up grants to reduce the tax levy by one mill and apply the balance to the working fund.



FIREFIGHTERS had their work cut out for them when flames destroyed the York Auto Body Shop, on the Fourth Line near Limehouse last week. The

blaze started as a motor was being dropped into a panel truck and completely gutted the sheet metal building along with valuable tools and equipment.

First Halton Hills budget . . .

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controversy over whether the start-up costs should go completely to the working fund or the other way to reduce the rate by two and half mills.

Council voted for a compromise to reduce the rate across the board by one mill and send the rest to the working fund (the story of the controversy is elsewhere).

Councillor McKenzie said they had approached the town's first budget by figuring out what had been spent in all three former municipalities last year and added 10 per cent for inflation. The only item which did not meet the criteria was roads which will now be financed completely out of current revenue. This postponed several road projects in Georgetown and Acton, including the reconstruction of Church St. until 1975.

Most councillors seemed pleased with the budget in view of the dire warnings predicted of astronomical increases but most were also acutely aware of greater costs in the second and third years of operation where provincial grants would be reduced in some instances and completely eradicated in others.

Councillor Coxe maintained regional cost next year would be much higher and it could reflect on this year's budget where the responsibilities are mandatory. He said this year's tax rate is a false indication of the mill rate because it is covered up by the transitional grants from the province. He

felt in reality Ward 2 taxpayers faced a 20 mill rate increase this year and would have to face it next year with no transitional grants.

"The boys at Queen's Park aren't going to continue forking money over," he insisted.

Councillor Ern Hyde contended that next year the lack of provincial support would affect Georgetown as much as Esqueusing and pointed out the rural areas were not assessed for services. Councillor Ric Morrow also pointed out the complete transitional grant from the Government went to reducing the Esqueusing mill rate.

However, Councillor Coxe told this newspaper that the Province only gives transitional grants to assist the rural areas to make the changeover to regional government. There would be none, he insisted, unless Esqueusing had been in the union. The Province determines the amount needed.

Councillor McKenzie was optimistic about future mill rate increases insisting that as conditional grants decrease assessment would increase in Halton Hills to offset the grants. He also felt setting the tax rate earlier would benefit the municipality which would be able to invest tax returns rather than have to borrow and pay interest.

Halton Hills was the first municipality in Halton to strike a budget, McKenzie prodded council into finishing it Thursday when feelers were being thrown out for an additional meeting before a decision was made. Council called a recess while treasurer Usher and Hutzal and auditor Goebelle changed the original figures to agree with the one mill reduction voted to reduce the tax rate across the board.

Duby praises budget explains Acton deficit

Former Acton mayor, now Councillor Les Duby of Ward 1 (Acton) explained to council it was good business for Acton to wind up with a \$10,000 deficit in the last year of operation.

He pointed out Georgetown and Esqueusing both had substantial surpluses but noted the difficulties a town of just over 5,000 to wrestle with costs and paying \$100,000 for police protection made reserves virtually impossible. The Acton deficit was paid off by part of Georgetown's surplus. The remaining surplus went to the proposed new Georgetown arena.

In his view the union of Acton, Esqueusing and Georgetown was a merger of three different types of municipalities -- a fairly large urban area of Georgetown with a substantial assessment, a rural area with further substantial assessment and a smaller urban area which struggled to maintain its identity on a modest assessment.

Duby praised the first Halton Hills budget as a "damn good job with a poor set of tools and situations to work with." He also paid tribute to the work of finance chairman Pat McKenzie for the hours he spent both at the region and town level in finalizing the budget.

It proves the job of a regional councillor is a full time effort, and a tiring one, too, Duby said. Councillor McKenzie was visibly tired from the many meetings of finance and council.

Ern Hyde is acting mayor

Halton Hills council appointed Councillor Ern Hyde as acting mayor while Mayor Tom Hill enjoys a vacation. The resolution was passed at the budget meeting of council Thursday night.

One house — one lot

Raising a "few pigeons, rabbits and pigs" is not enough to constitute a bonafide farm, according to administration committee of Halton Hills. They turned down the application of G. Franchino, Lot 32 Conc. 6 for a second residential permit on his property, pointing out only a bonafide farmer, housing hired help is allowed two residences on one property.

New arena

What about money from sports groups?

Ward 2 councillors Len Cox and Dick Howitt, both expressed their opposition to the first Halton Hills budget because (1) \$81,000 of the \$100,000 Esqueusing surplus went to funds proposed for the new arena in Georgetown and the remainder was allocated to reduce the general levy.

"They're the buggers that got the arena," complained Councillor Cox, "and now what about all the money the sports and service groups in Georgetown were going to raise for that new arena? Where is it going to go?" he asked.

Both Cox and Howitt felt the Esqueusing surplus should have been used to cushion the effects of the tax hike Esqueusing taxpayers faced.

Councillor Ern Hyde said, however, the town was trying to start out on a clean slate by giving money to those areas where the need was greatest. He foresaw more working together of all representatives of all wards towards one municipality and pointed out Georgetown's operating reserves had been used to wipe out a \$10,000 Acton deficit and the remainder went to the arena.

Hyde said Wards 3 and 4 (Georgetown) had sacrificed more than Ward 2 (Esqueusing) and had been completely unselfish.

Cox maintained that if the five mills taken out of Esqueusing funds for the arena had cost the former township more than Halton Hills which would only need one mill to raise the same amount. A mill represents approximately \$67,000 in the new town.

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What's doing in North Halton area

CLOTHING AID

Free clothing will be available through a volunteer group known as Clothing Aid, on August 10, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, at 4 Mill Street, Acton. Donations will be gratefully received.

LACROSSE

Enjoy Junior "C" Lacrosse, Sunday, August 11, at the Acton Community Centre. The Acton Rams will be hosting Huntsville. This game is part of the playoff schedule—so don't miss it.

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4-H member selected for meet

Stuart Gregson, R.R. 1, Hillsburgh was selected recently at the 4-H Provincial Leadership Conference to attend the National 4-H Club conference at Chicago. Dates have been set from Nov. 29 to Dec. 6.

Selected for maturity, attitude and ability to relate to others, Stuart was chosen from 98 delegates and will represent the 4-H members from Ontario at the week-long event. According to A. G. Grube, Agricultural representative for Wellington county, "The honor of being selected is most deserving for Stuart."

ARTHUR A. JOHNSON O.D.

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