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Budget chief criticizes school board tax hike

It's 'pay as you go' with low town budget

By CHRIS AAGAARD
Herald Staff Writer

Having crushed a "pay as you go" philosophy while planning annual municipal expenditures over the last few years, town department heads and budget committee members have managed once again to arrive at an operating budget increase well below the inflation rate, presenting council Monday night with an \$8,255,842 package for 1982.

The amount, unanimously endorsed by council, is \$1,023,509 more than last year's budget and follows a decision made in February to spend as much as \$5 million on capital works projects in town.

Rural taxpayers can expect an average 7.2 per cent increase in their tax bill to pay for the operating budget, while residents of the urban areas will likely see their taxes rise an average 9.5 per cent.

Presenting the budget to council, finance chairman Harry Levy praised town staff for "not overloading" their

budget requests this year and thanked budget committee members and other councillors for regularly attending Saturday meetings.

Halton Hills residents, he added, can expect the same level of service from the town they've received in the past "and an increase in some areas". The "pay as you go" philosophy means that the town will not issue debentures—a form of borrowing money—to cover operating expenditures and the town has deliberately restricted tax increases to amounts below the inflation rate, hovering around 13 per cent.

While he thanked those who worked on the budget and lauded the region's financial house cleaning this year, Coun. Levy was not so gracious with the architects of Halton's board of education budget.

"It is a pity that the board of education does not appear to be taking a hard look at their financial responsibilities," he said. "According to our app-

roach, the board should be looking at a \$43 increase in taxes.

Two weeks ago, school board trustees approved a \$132 million budget. The average Halton homeowner will pay an extra \$91 in school taxes.

However, Coun. Levy said that school trustees are just as concerned about this year's high school budget and said that budget planning next year would likely be done in consultation with school board, town and regional overseers.

Commenting on the budget, Mayor Pete Pomey singled out the town's volunteer fire brigades for saving the town hundreds of thousands of dollars every year.

Included in the operating budget this year are \$126,758 worth of projects to be carried out with the Halton Region and Credit Valley conservation authorities, largely for flood and erosion control.

Urban service area charges, essentially charges for street lighting and garbage collect-

ion, will increase substantially this year as the town spends \$50,335 to upgrade streetlighting in Acton and Georgetown. Another \$1,082,786 will be spent on capital works projects not covered by the previously passed capital works budget.

Thanks to a provincial ministry of transportation and communications subsidy of \$15,000 and a general support grant also provided by the province, the town was able to start budgeting this year with a \$39,000 increase in revenue, while it lopped off \$295,997 worth of proposed expenditures during the months of budget preparation.

Capital items in this year's operating budget include: —\$74,500 worth of new equipment for the fire department, including a \$9,500 new firechief's car, new helmets and upgraded fire detection equipment.

—the softball diamonds in Fairgrounds and Prospect parks will get new lighting this year and the recreation and parks department will install "creative" playground equipment at various schools throughout town.

—an elevator for the physically handicapped is planned for Gordon Alcott Arena. all-

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BIG DOIN'S IN DOGPATCH

Pontificating in the Dogpatch town square, Marvin (Alexander Oldaker) manages to "sway" the crowd to his way of thinking in Stewarttown Senior Public School's production of "I, U Abner" which finished a three-night run at the John Elliott Theatre Saturday. All of the cartoon favorites—Daisy Mae, I, U Abner, Mammy and Pappy Yokum—joined an enormous and comical cast as the town saved itself from oblivion at the hands of government nuclear bomb testers. While the production boasted a very large cast, there was almost an equally large backstage crew and students who had helped with stage design and props. (Herald photo by Chris Aagaard)

Departing minister is Acton's top citizen

Acton's choice for its Citizen of the Year of 1981 amounts to a resounding vote of thanks from a grateful community and particularly those who form the congregation of Trinity United Church.



Rev. Chuck Beaton

Congregation members and non-members alike lobbied the Acton Chamber of Commerce with ballots nominating Trinity's Rev. Charles (Chuck) Beaton, who'll assume new ministerial duties in Hamilton in July, for the special citation. Six years of voluntary community work focusing on Trinity United but encompassing the whole town earned Rev. Beaton the honor previously bestowed upon 24 deserving Actonians who've collectively improved their town's social, commercial and cultural climate beyond measure. They'll be honored once more along with Rev. Beaton at the annual Citizen of the Year banquet, expected to be held later this month or in early May.

Aware that Rev. Beaton, 46, will soon be leaving Acton to become senior minister of Olivet United Church in Hamilton, some 40 nominators recognized the Acton Chamber's annual honor as a timely reward for the minister's efforts on behalf of the Cancer Society, local young people, the Acton ministerial association and specific community projects. The immensely popular Board's Head Dinner has be-

come another big reason why Actonians look forward to the Christmas season. Borrowing an idea from his previous congregation in Markham, Rev. Beaton organized local youth to serve up a bounteous Old English feast amid all the medieval trappings, and the celebrants from all denominations come in droves. Again finding exciting alternatives for bored young

people, Rev. Beaton helped found "The Mug" coffee shop in the Murray Memorial YMCA building and gave its teenage patrons a hand decorating and promoting it. For the even younger crowd, he fostered new interest in Scouting, urging his congregation at Trinity to get involved with new groups and giving Halton Hills its

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Greyhound races coming to fair?

By BETTYANNE WELLS
Fairboard publicist

Greyhound racing may be coming to Georgetown for the first time in the town's history.

It was announced at an executive meeting of the Georgetown Fair Board that a preliminary meeting had been held with greyhound racing representatives and that tentative plans had been made to feature greyhound racing at Georgetown Fair, which is being moved ahead this year to the second week of September.

In the hope of attracting more people to the fair, it has also been decided by the board to extend the fair to three days, Sept. 10 to 12, with greyhound racing to highlight the Sunday afternoon program.

"To our knowledge, greyhound racing has never been

held at Georgetown Fair," says Joyce Gosling, president of the Agricultural Society. "We hope it will be a popular attraction for the entire family. It's something that many people in the area have never seen, although in some parts of the world, such as Great Britain and United States, it is a very popular sport."

Robert Massey of Gormley, president of the Ontario Greyhound Racing Federation, reports to local officials that greyhound races are a regular feature of Markham Fair each year and have been enjoyed at several other Ontario fairs, including last year's Norfolk County Fair at Simcoe.

As far as anyone knows, there has never been greyhound racing in the Georgetown area, although lure-coasting competitions, which see only two dogs compete at a time, are occasionally held

at a Halton farm. Mr. Massey explains that an average dog race, such as those scheduled for Georgetown Fair, sees six or more greyhounds compete in a race, motivated by an electric or motorized lure (called the rabbit). With a good sand track like the one in Georgetown, he predicts that spectators can expect to see some great races. Since betting on greyhounds has never been approved in Canada, there will be no pari-mutual betting as is done at horse races throughout the country.

President Gosling says that in recent years, the Fair Board has been most anxious to put the excellent track at Fairgrounds Park back into use—the way it used to be at earlier fairs, when Georgetown Fair usually featured six to eight sulky heats. "We feel that greyhound racing will offer the same

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HE'S QUITE A GUY

You can't get a sneak look at the Acton High School's production of the musical "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" unless you get special permission or are part of the cast, crew or orchestra for it. This and other pictures in The Herald will have to appease your curiosity until April 22 when the curtain goes up for the first of three consecutive evening performances in the high school's cafeteria. With a cast of 16, this is the first time the popular musical has been done with a chorus section, increasing the usually six character show. (Herald photo)

Politics delayed cops' budget, Morrow says

Public good is being confused with political expediency, a Halton regional police commissioner charged Monday.

Commissioner Ric Morrow

of Georgetown said he is concerned that Halton regional councillors who rejected the \$15.6 million proposed police budget last week are getting public good confused with their political sense of survival in this election year. "The basic disagreement was in the number of people (police Chief James Harding) was going to hire this year," Mayor Pete Pomey, a member of the budget committee, said. "They asked him to go back and see if it could be phased in over two years to try and keep costs down for this year."

Chief Harding has asked for 15 new uniformed policemen and four civilian employees. If approved, four of the uniformed officers would be hired for Halton Hills.

"I'm afraid everybody's zeroing in on the percentage increase with no regard to how our costs compare to other regional police forces," Mr. Morrow complained.

"The police budget, when proper mathematics is done and comparisons made, shows Halton's budget is more than justified."

The region's finance and administration committee is to go over the police budget next week before it's brought to council for approval.

If council rejects the budget, it will go to the Ontario Police Commission for arbitration, where the budget will be approved or reduced.

BELIEVE IT. CANCER CAN BE BEATEN.
Give to the Canadian Cancer Society.

YES IT CAN!

The Cancer Society canvassers are organized in Georgetown. Four of them, (left to right) Julie Farrigan, Dee Botwell, Jette Shepard and Judy Pomeroy, took a break from their Thursday night meeting to open out the folds of a banner and spread the good word. April is Cancer Month and these women, along with 26 volunteers, will be visiting 250 businesses in the Georgetown area to ask for their financial support. (Herald photo)

Pope's handshake Rome visit highlight

Georgetown District High School teacher Ted Maslach got the thrill of his life on a March break student trip to Rome he was helping supervise when Pope John Paul II singled him out in a large crowd for a handshake and a few words of greeting.

Mr. Maslach and fellow teachers Ron Nelson and Peter Wren were chaperoning 12 GDHS students on a school trip to Italy last week when their visit to Rome took them to Vatican Square, where the Pope was conducting his weekly public audience last Wednesday.

The Georgetown group was close enough to the pontiff as he passed that Mr. Maslach had a chance to wish him "happy Easter" in Polish. Both Mr. Maslach and Pope John Paul are Polish-born. The Pope heard him and came over to shake hands with Mr. Maslach and Mr. Wren.

Mr. Maslach said later it was something he'd never have dreamed of happening. The Roman holiday also took the GDHS group to the Colosseum and the Forum as well as the Vatican's Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica. Longer excursions took them to the ancient ruins of Pompeii, Capri, Tivoli and Villa d'Este. Two of the party also enjoyed a trip to Florence.

Trip co-ordinator Ron Nelson said he was pleased with the excursion and happy about the group's behavior and activities, particularly the way they accepted minor problems. The GDHS party celebrated the end of an exciting holiday with a full-fledged, seven-course Italian banquet in Rome.