

Halton proposes six per cent increase in water, sewer rates

By DONNA KELL
the Herald

Halton residents could face an increase of six per cent in water and sewer rates this January and a 38.6 per cent increase in waste disposal fees in 1990.

Halton's Regional finance commissioner Joe Rinaldo presented Regional council Wednesday with a budget proposal outlining an increase of 10.2 per cent for water, sewer and waste disposal operations in a total budget of \$68.3 million.

The actual budget increase of 16.5 per cent over last year is offset by increased users of the municipal services and increased revenues, Mr. Rinaldo said.

The average residence in Halton will face an increase of \$35.58 in 1990 if Halton Regional council approves the increases for water and sewerage service in December and waste management costs in March or April. Residents who pay \$350.21 for these services in 1989 would pay \$385.79 in 1990.

The increased water charges would be on January's hydro bill, Mr. Rinaldo said. Water costs will increase a proposed \$6.01 a household while sewage costs will rise by \$12.57 - a total of six per cent for 1990.

Each household would contribute an average \$17 a year to offset increases in tipping fees - the cost of transporting and disposing of Halton's garbage.

This Region's garbage is shipped out of Halton to sites in New York state and Niagara Falls, Ontario. Those sites have increased their fees, Mr. Rinaldo said.

Halton's own landfill site in Burlington closed in September of this year.

"This may be the last year we come in with such bad news," Mr. Rinaldo said of the proposed increases to meet landfill costs. "Things could turn around for us."

The Region's finance staff predicts tipping fee costs will plunge in 1992 and 1993, with the

opening of the approved landfill site on Highway 25 in Milton. That site is now being contested by several Milton groups, including the Town of Milton.

The preliminary budget report predicts a peak tipping fee cost of \$131 a tonne in 1991. This cost will drop to \$111 in 1992, the year the Regional landfill site is scheduled to open. Costs could further plummet to \$65 a tonne a year after the landfill site is in operation.

Regions surrounding Halton pay less for tipping fees because they have access to local landfill sites, Mr. Rinaldo said. "We're the only Region that exports 100 per cent of its waste out of the Region."

Metro Toronto and Durham Region proposed tipping fee costs of \$100 for 1990. Peel Region and Hamilton-Wentworth predict a \$90 tipping fee cost for their municipalities. Mr. Rinaldo said Halton was used as a "model" for other regions to set tipping fee costs.

Pay equity could cost town taxpayers \$100,000

A provincial law forcing employers to pay women the same wages as men for equal work could cost the Town of Halton Hills \$100,000 in next year's budget.

The ministry of labor Pay Equity Act, passed by the provincial government in 1987, was revised Oct. 18 to include methods of comparing work of equal value from one company to another.

Halton Hills finance department included \$100,000 in a 1990 preliminary budget report to allow

for pay equity changes, but that figure is a "guestimate," treasurer Ray King said.

"That was the best estimate I could gather but it's not necessarily the end result."

Halton Region's 1990 budget will feel the impact of the pay equity scheme, Regional Finance Commissioner Joe Rinaldo said. Mr. Rinaldo estimates the Region will need to pay \$150,000 to level out pay inequities, but he said it's too soon to tell now.

Councillors want to talk to VIA

A local member of federal parliament should come to Halton Hills to explain why half the town's VIA service will be cut this January, Georgetown Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson said Monday.

The councillor said "what's happening is undemocratic."

Town councillors agreed to a recommendation that an MP and a representative from a committee

on VIA rail service comment "on the merits of discontinuation and continuation of this (VIA) service and how our community will be affected" at a future council meeting.

VIA will cut services to Georgetown in half as of Jan. 15. The morning train to Toronto will be discontinued, VIA spokesman Richard Gauthier said.

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