

Hospital to maintain service level

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

Despite insufficient provincial funding, Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital will be able to maintain the existing level of health care service to the community during the hospital's 1991/92 fiscal year.

Hospital Executive Director John Oliver said Wednesday the lack of provincial funding forces the hospital to use last year's budgetary surplus, totalling approximately \$370,000, to bring in a balanced budget.

The Hospital Board of Directors approved the \$13.9 million budget, of which 85 per cent is funded by the province, at a board meeting last Thursday. The meeting was closed to the public. The budget doesn't become final until the province's Ministry of Health reviews it, said Mr. Oliver.

Since the hospital must use the

surplus, local residents shouldn't expect the hospital to introduce any new programs during the coming year. This prediction would only change, said Mr. Oliver, if the province is forthcoming with more funding than was outlined in the recently announced provincial budget.

The hospital's expenditures are 11 per cent higher over last year while provincial funding only increased by six per cent, said Mr. Oliver.

He attributed the hospital's expenditure increase to large wage settlements and increases to employee benefits.

Mr. Oliver said the Ministry of Health will soon start to review the impact of the recent wage increases to nurses in Ontario. The province has also indicated it may consider the possibility of providing hospitals greater funding for their respective pay

equity programs, he said.

Mr. Oliver stated, "In the past when the ministry has surveyed hospital costs, often it has moved to provide extra funding."

A more positive side of the budget is the inclusion of money permitting the hospital to continue to upgrade the hospital building. Projects include: a hospital painting project, renovations to some nursing stations, the emergency department and admitting area, the installation of a new nurses call-bell system, new windows, improvements to the heating and ventilation system and the purchase of new capital equipment.

The hospital has also budgeted \$70,000 to carry out a long-term strategic plan as well as studies on health care services for Halton Hills seniors, and the future possibilities of hospital computerized information systems, said Mr. Oliver.

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'Fed-up' vows to fight inaction

Vocal and constant lobbying at the local and provincial levels of government is the only way to effect

change, says Rita Landry, a founding member of the new Halton Hills based ratepayers

group, "Fed Up."

"The group's name means exactly what it says," explained Ms. Landry.

The 60-member group is fed up with what they believe is a constant influx of new projects for the Town that are not beneficial. "If it's not a cement block plant it's the issue of hydro fly ash dumping, or increased quarrying activity or bringing waste into the community; every time I turn around it's a new issue," said Ms. Landry.

"The group feels the whole community is under seige," she added.

The only way to stop these types of projects is to apply political pressure and do it with loud voices, she said. That's the way you catch media attention and in turn draw politicians to the issue, explained Ms. Landry.

The group's primary focus is to stop the Acton dump proposal from becoming a reality. The group's strategy is simple: direct all attention on lobbying the province's Minister of the Environment, Ruth Grier, that the proposal is "dumb" and should be stopped now.

Long established local environmental group Protect Our Water Environmental Resources (POWER) has been fighting the dump proposal since its inception.

While the POWER group is concentrating its efforts on fundraising activities and gaining further public support, Fed Up is focusing on the political end, said Ms. Landry. The group isn't in competition with POWER, "but we feel not enough is being done at the political end."

People in Fed Up have tried "the nice way and the reasonable way and it hasn't been working," she said.

POWER President Barbara Halsall wouldn't comment on the group, explaining that she has only heard about the group in passing and has yet to meet with any of the members.



Book sale success

Jane McDowell (right) is being presented with her Adult Learner Award by Sue Grant of the University Women's Club of Georgetown. Jane received her award by demonstrating motivation and success in her advanced computer course at Georgetown High School, this semester. She presently has a co-op placement at Varion in Georgetown. The University Women's Club Book Sale was held on Sat., April 20 and the proceeds from this sale go to these Scholarships and Awards for our Halton Hills students. (Photo submitted)

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