

# Proposed budget contains 1.9% tax hike

**By Rebecca Ring**

On Monday, April 23, Guelph/Eramosa Township held a public meeting to discuss its proposed 2007 Operating and Capital Budget. The tax rate is proposed to increase from 0.00260977 to 0.00265934, representing a 1.9% increase.

Last year's rate represented a decrease compared to 2005, when it was 0.00287665. For a home with an assessed value of \$350,000, the proposed 2007 increase would equal \$17.35.

Revenue from taxation is expected to be \$3,620,982, with another \$5,124,771 from other sources, totalling \$8,745,753, which equal the total budgeted expenditures of \$8,745,753.

Budget highlights include updating fire department equipment, such as bunker gear, breathing apparatus, and stadium lighting for the tanker (\$44,000); Indian Trail bridge replacement and other road work, some in conjunction with Canada Ontario Municipal Rural Investment

Fund, total \$987,734.89 with grants totaling \$595,676.60; replacement of a tandem dump/sander/plow (\$145,000); right-of-way improvements on Pasmore St. to increase safety of children dropped off at school (\$18,000); Rockwood Medical Centre expansion (\$85,000); new roof for Rockwood Library (\$35,000); demolition of the old fire hall on Alma St. (\$25,000); expansion of municipal offices at Brucedale (\$20,000 for 2007 plus \$50,000 transferred to reserves for future); and cemetery repairs and maintenance (\$15,000).

Each department head spoke on proposed expenditures and revenues for their area and questions and comments from the public were fielded. EWAG secretary and Family Health Team Chair, Erik Sterne, thanked council and staff for assisting with the medical centre expansion. He said new facilities will attract much needed physicians.

Keith Daniels asked if the old fire hall could be used for municipal offices, rather than pay to tear it down and expand the Brucedale office. Mayor Chris White said there has been no decision made on the old fire hall yet. Manager of Finance Linda Cheyne said it is a proposed capital plan and no decision has been made on the expansion. She said the offices are overcrowded with staff working in the basement and a trailer.

Daniels said that administration costs for nine staff members average \$64,000 each. He asked, "Does council know what the actual remuneration is for each employee?"

Clerk/CAO Janice Sheppard said that the Freedom of Information Act maintains that hourly rates are confidential, but there is a pay grid for the salary of each position. White added that the head of each department determines the employee's salary, except for the CAO/clerk.

Daniels then asked if council knows the clerk's salary. White replied roughly, but not exactly.

Daniels said that about 20.5% of the budget goes to administration costs and that municipalities of equal size average much less, such as North Dundas at 3.6%, with the municipal average at 2.9%. Cheyne said other municipalities might not include the same parameters as this one in their reports. White said, "It is not necessarily comparing apples to apples." Daniels asked if the significant difference is only because it is not reported in the same way.

Past mayor Clint Martin said the township is overstaffed. He quoted a 1999 formula that says a population of 12,000 needs five full time staff and Guelph/Eramosa has 11, with nine in administration. Staff salaries, wages and benefits are budgeted at \$644,000 for 2007.

A member of the Rockwood Eramosa Business Association asked about the ten recommendations they submitted. White answered that most will fall under the proposed budget for the Hwy. #7 Design Committee and thanked them for the list.

Council will vote on the budget at their meeting on May 7.

## The ROCKWOOD Miller



**ROAD HOCKEY RULES:** The Rockwood Rebels Road Hockey team came in second at the 3rd Annual Ray Scapinello Road Hockey Tournament on April 14. From left are Tanner Rodd, Tyler Barrant, Ray Scapinello, Joey Shaw and Ethan Barrant.

## Road hockey tourney Rockwood team makes the finals

**By Rebecca Ring**

A team of four Rockwood boys placed second among 32 teams in their division at the Third Annual Ray Scapinello Road Hockey Tournament on April 14.

Tanner Rodd, Tyler Barrant, Joey Shaw and Ethan Barrant made up the Rockwood Rebels road hockey team and played in the intermediate 11/12-year-old division. They won four games to play in the championship game, which they lost 7-1.

Seventy-three teams played in all at McNeil Consumer Healthcare in Guelph. There were three age group di-

visions: 9/10, 11/12, and 13/14.

Organizer Ray Scapinello had a 33-year professional career in hockey as an NHL official. He retired in 2004. Proceeds from the tournament went to benefit youth in the Guelph area through the Guelph Community Foundation. For more information, visit [www.raysroadhockey.ca](http://www.raysroadhockey.ca).

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