

Still up 27%

Budget chopping continues

For seven weeks now Regional Committees have agonized over budget estimates before them. As of Friday the \$34,000,000 budget had been cut by about four per cent. In its original form the budget called for an increase of 31 per cent.

At a special meeting of the Community Services Committee Friday at the Halton Centennial Manor the committee approved three departmental budgets, all carrying sharp increases.

In its original form the budget represented an in-

creased expenditure of 31 per cent. After dozens of meetings and countless numbers of hours spent on the budget, that increase has been whittled to about 27 per cent, according to Treasurer Don Farmer. Figures haven't been officially compiled and the 27 per cent is only an estimate.

Abnormal increases at both the Children's Aid Society and the Halton Centennial Manor account for part of the big increases in the regional budget.

The CAS budget called for an increase of 62 per cent originally. A shocked Regional Chairman, Ric Morrow, made headlines when he blasted the CAS at the annual meeting of the society for submitting the budget in that form. The CAS budget has been in the news ever since.

Finally after a number of meetings of the Region's Community Service Committee, including some joint meetings with CAS officials, the committee reluctantly approved the budget with an increase of 39 per cent.

CAS officials managed to cut the estimates to 39 per cent by phasing in new programs and taking on new staffers later in the year than was originally proposed.

While the cuts will provide some relief this year the full impact will show up next year. Without introducing any new programs next year the CAS budget will jump by another 30 per cent. It stands at \$1,385,528 and

indications are it will go up to at least \$1,800,000 next year. Unlike most other budgets the Region can not exercise full control of the CAS budget. If the region wants to challenge the budget it has to go before the provincial review board.

The Community Services Committee had asked the CAS to top \$150,000 off the budget and come back and show the committee where those cuts would be made and what the impact would be.

When the CAS came back Director Ron Coupland presented a report showing where \$89,200 could be chopped from the estimates but warned that "those cuts would seriously retard and

jeopardize the services of the Children's Aid Society to the Region's children."

"We cannot see how a further \$61,000 can be removed without sabotaging completely, an already over-stressed service delivery system."

The budget for Halton Centennial Manor presented by Administrator Stan Allen, calling for an increase of 54 per cent, was approved with only minor changes.

The Manor budget calls for an expenditure of \$3,807,406 this year. The Region's share of that works out to about \$764,260. The region recovers a large percentage of the operating costs in provincial grants and fees paid by the

residents.

A Social and Family Services Budget calling for the expenditure of \$2,644,676 was approved by the Committee and escaped any major cutting at Friday's session as well.

Most of the regional committees have approved or are about to approve budget estimates so they can be forwarded to the council for further cutting or ratification early in May.

BULLETIN—The treasurer's department reported late Tuesday an error had been found and the Manor levy increase was now nine per cent, not 54 per cent as discussed above. Some additional revenues were located.

4.5 per cent unemployed in Halton

While Canada is experiencing unprecedented levels of unemployment Halton Region is relatively well off in that regard.

Unemployment in Halton stands at 4.5 per cent compared to the provincial average of over seven per cent, according to Halton Social and Family Services Administrator Rennie Vivian.

Many provinces have higher rates of unemployment and in Newfoundland unemployment runs at 17 per cent.

There are over 1,000,000 people unemployed in Canada now.

Policy change irks Barrett

Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett flew into a rage at a meeting of the Region's Administration Committee Wednesday after learning of a policy change concerning the collection of capital levies.

The change would see the region collect its own capital levies and set its own rates for the levies.

Barrett is adamantly opposed to having the region involved in any way with lot levies. He sees that as a responsibility of the local council.

Lot levies are fees developers pay for each home they build in order to help offset the demands on the community's services.

Regional Treasurer Don Farmer and some councillors have complained about the current policy. They claim as long as area councillors control those funds the funds will be used on area projects and the region will be forced

to debenture more projects than would otherwise be necessary. But Barrett doesn't concur.

The change in policy came to light during consideration of a plan of subdivision at the Administration Committee meeting Wednesday.

Several of the councillors on the committee were surprised to learn that they had unknowingly approved of the change at the previous council meeting.

The matter was put before council at the meeting as later business and some never read the minutes of the meeting.

"I'm sick and tired of this nonsense. The same things keep coming back and coming back until it slips through," Barrett charged.

After checking the resolution Councillor Carl Eriksen said the approval was only in principle. Both he and Barrett will seek to halt the change when the matter comes before council again.

Support for Centre

Halton Regional Council will be asked to provide additional financial support for the Acton Community Services Centre to allow the centre to improve upon the services being offered.

Council's Community Services Committee agreed to provide funds over and above the \$5,687 grant already allocated for 1977 but did not determine what the additional grant would amount to.

Acton area councillor Pat McKenzie had arranged a meeting between Centre representatives and officials from the region including Chief Administrative Officer Ernie Reid.

Mr. McKenzie noted the coordinator at the centre had been forced to resign because her family was moving to Sarnia and he felt it would be a good time to put a regional staffer on duty in a rented office.

He said the staffer could integrate both statutory and

voluntary social service agencies in the community.

He noted that the region had provided similar services in all of the other urban centres in the region.

Chief Administrative Officer Mr. Reid told the committee he felt the centre was a worthwhile organization but felt the region would be wiser to encourage the centre to continue with volun-

Haul garbage to Burlington

Milton's Public Works Department may have to haul garbage to Burlington instead of Halton Hills if a motion going to Regional Council is eventually approved.

Halton Hills Councillor Russ Miller told the Regional Public Works Committee

Wesnesday that he feared the Georgetown dump would fill up before a new landfill site is acquired and Halton Hills would end up hauling from one end of the region to the other. He said the haulage costs would be very expensive.

Councillor Miller said Halton Hills could buy some time in the Georgetown dump if Milton garbage was diverted. He said it was a 70 mile round trip from Georgetown to Burlington.

There is only one year left in the Georgetown landfill site now according to engineer Don Morrier. The committee agreed to make the change pending a report from staff.

The change will result in greater haulage costs for Milton.

Doctors arrange many adoptions

Halton doctors are placing an increasing number of new born babies in homes and bypassing the waiting list of people who want to adopt babies, according to the Director of the Children's Aid Society, Ron Coupland.

Mr. Coupland said there are over 100 babies placed that way each year in order to short circuit the waiting list that parents would face if they went through the CAS.

That caused councillor Pat McKenzie to ask if doctors were charging an under-the-table fee to the parents adopting the children.

His question drew a sharp no comment from Mr. Coup-

land. Questioned by reporters later Mr. Coupland said the prospect of doctors charging fees for providing children is something that always exists but he said he had no concrete information on which those charges could be supported.

Gordon wants more control

Milton Mayor Don Gordon wants better control over accounts paid through the Treasury Department, he told Halton Region's Administration Committee Wednesday.

Gordon said each committee should approve its own accounts, each councillor should receive a monthly list showing how much had been paid on any given account and the various departments should be forecasting their

needs a year ahead. Gordon said he wanted to see forecasts for 1978 when he deals with a 1977 budget for example. "This way it won't take as long to approve a budget," he told the committee.

Gordon's plan received a hardy endorsement from Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett. He said there was a real need to tighten up on the procedure for approving accounts.

"We're responsible. We should know where the dollars are going. Knowledge

of the accounts is knowledge of the operation," Barrett said.

Chief Administrative Officer Ernie Reid and Treasurer Don Farmer said

Gordon's plan could be carried out but it would mean a lot of extra paper work.

The committee will recommend Council adopt Gordon's three point checklist.

Endorse increase in fees

People applying to the Regional Land Division Committee for land severances could end up paying \$150 for each application, instead of the \$50 they now pay.

Halton Region's Administration Committee passed a resolution asking that the Land Division Committee be allowed to charge the higher fee, during the budget deliberations last week.

Provincial legislation controls the amount that can be charged. Mrs. P. Bihune, secretary manager for the committee said members of the committee favor an increase in the rates but haven't been authorized to make the change.

Council briefs

Milton Council Monday; —Proclaimed the week of May 27 as Chamber of Commerce Week.

—Decided to advertise the former Nassagaweya Township office building for rent. Funk Seeds had rented the building but was moving out and correspondence indicated the board of education, Halton Region Conservation Authority, Halton Police and Halton Region were not interested in using the building.

—Authorized the clerk and treasurer to attend the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario conference June 19-22 in North York.

Cable 4 this week

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20

7:00—"The Rud Whiting Show" guest: John Jensen, Milton Skydiver

7:30—"Takin' Care" a presentation by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

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