

Lightning strikes twice Region has new deficit

Halton's long-awaited 1980 audit has shown the region to be \$106,000 deeper in debt than anyone had expected.

Members of the Administration and Finance Committee were told last week that the audit uncovered \$75,000 in unpaid wages for hourly rated and administrative staff and \$25,000 for audit fees that sent the deficit figures climbing.

For taxpayers, the new figures mean another tax increase of about one per cent, according to the region's newly appointed Treasurer Gary Lawson.

The 1980 Halton deficit is composed of three parts, a shortfall of \$451,283 in tax supported services; a deficit of \$723,533 on the sewer surcharge; and a surplus of \$586,358 on water accounts.

The "bottom line" then is a \$588,000 deficit.

Most of the shortfall has already been covered by budget cuts and the use of all the region's reserve funds. The latest amount, however, will be added directly to tax bills.

In Oakville, for instance, residents are facing a total tax increase of about \$124 based on an average assessment of \$7,000. About 16 per cent of that will go to Halton Region.

The report came at an awkward moment for regional councillors who have been working with an estimated \$350,000 deficit since February.

The current auditors, Cheney, Glenn and Graydon, have been employed by the region since 1974. Presently the region has made a proposal call leaving open the question whether the same group of auditors will be in the employ of the region come 1982.

"Is this because of what happened last year?" asked Milton Mayor Gord Krantz in last week's finance committee meeting.

"I understand if we drop the auditors, others won't come in."

"It's not a question," said Halton Chief Administrator Dennis Perlin, "of getting rid of them.

"We're simply attempting to see what other type of service we can get and at what cost."

The final statement by the auditors has not yet been completed but was presented to council members in order to levy in 1981 for last year's deficit.

Sewer rates for 1981 had been based on a deficit of \$660,000.

The actual deficit was \$720,000, but much was covered with budget cuts this year.

In water services there was a surplus for 1980 of \$580,000 leaving \$17,000 more than was estimated.

This week at the region the Health and Social Services, Public Works, Planning Committee, Police, Halton Region Conservation Authority and the Children's Aid Society met in regional committee chambers to go over their 1981 budgets for the last time.

Council will meet today in the near closing round of talks to finalize the operating budget.



Accord reached. Halton Region Conservation Authority officials and regional councillors have come to agreement on the 1981 authority levy. From left: HRCA Chairman Brock Harris and General Manager Murray Stephen, explain where cuts were made.

HRCA trims 81 budget

The Halton Region Conservation Authority has been able to make a \$73,613.77 reduction in its 1981 budget estimates and this has been accepted by the Regional Administration and Finance Committee.

HRCA General Manager Murray Stephen said the reduction, of which the region's portion is \$65,961.95 means the 1981 general levy has been reduced from \$1,076,933.05 to \$1,010,971.10.

Part of the reduction is based on the expectation of a 75 per cent grant, instead of 55 per cent, from the Ministry of Natural Resources in expropriating land at Hilton Falls.

The revenue fund deficit, Mr. Stephen said, can be reduced by \$12,000 for the figures in the 1981 HRCA budget which reduces the Regional levy by \$10,731.60.

The HRCA will also be receiving \$16,540 in Provincial Reduction Subsidy money in Milton that amounts to \$1,323 and in Halton Hills \$6,546.

Town — union settle contract

The town of Milton and its 28 outside workers have reached a new two-year contract.

The contract calls for a 10.75 per cent wage hike and a 1.25 per cent hike in benefits in the first year. In the second year there will be an additional 10.75 per cent raise in wages.

Milton Financial Director, Don Loughheed said he was pleased with the contract and the amicable method at which it was reached.

The new contract terminates Feb. 28, 1983.

Chief bemoans lack of officers

The region must realize that it is not able to provide complete policing under the current budgetary restrictions according to Chief Jim Harding.

Chief Harding made his remarks after the Regional Administration and Finance Committee had cut back the 1981 operating budget to 15.72 per cent more than 1980 and also made cuts in the capital construction budget.

He said even though he will be getting 11 more police officers, he needs 85 new police officers to bring the region up to an acceptable norm.

Quoting figures on police to population ratios, Chief Harding said the ratio in Halton now is one officer for every 873 people.

The nine other regions in Ontario have an average of one to 704, 20 major cities have one to 662, and Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police have a ratio of one to 588 residents.

Chief Harding said using the expected growth in the police budget to hire new officers and comparing it to the expected growth of population in the region, the force would soon have one officer for every 905 people.

"I suppose it could be said that if someone has to be last, it might as well be us."

"But I think we should be saying if anyone is going to be first it should be us," Chief Harding said from a written statement.

He said by far the greatest need is for a special drug squad and a special fraud squad. Currently duty officers are being called in to solve drug and fraud cases where police specialists should be employed.

He said many people in the education system and justice system, including Family Court Judge Jim Fuller, has asked for the force to get special drug-trained officers to the schools to stop the drug trade.

In what he called an "abdication of responsibility," Chief Harding said the deficient number of officers he now has to cover all of Halton Region was causing delays in response times.



Warns of danger. Halton Regional Police Chief Jim Harding, centre, read a statement to regional councillors warning them not to let the police budget be cut to a point where it would mean inadequate protection.

Board renews terms for eight consultants

Eight consultants used by Halton Board of Education can breathe a little easier. For a while.

Halton trustees voted Thursday to renew term appointments of seven and add one consultant—but only after strong challenges from two Burlington members.

Burlington trustees Bill Herd and Bill Priestner took issue with the renewals. Herd wondered why mainly the same faces were rehired. Priestner indicated the term appointments were no different than regular employees.

Priestner also indicated that the original idea for term appointments was for a person to be appointed to a specific job.

With one exception all were hired on again as of next September. The exception is the instructional media consultant. His job was declared redundant.

In his place is a French language consultant. The addition to the French staff is due to "needs arising from the expansion of Core French," according to Halton program superintendent Bob Dixon.

Trustee Priestner went so far as to give notice of a motion that would rescind the board's policy concerning term ap-

pointments for consultants because, as the policy is applied, the consultants are no different than other board employees.

A one year term was approved for the social science consultant.

Shop is damaged

Milton Fire Department officials hope this week to determine the cause behind a fire in a workshop at the Frankel Steel plant on Highway 105 Saturday afternoon.

The fire, which is believed to have smoldered for a number of hours, caught the attention of a plant employee who stopped to fill up his truck at approximately 1.30 p.m.

Milton firefighters arrived on the scene to find the entire building filled with heavy, black smoke.

Erection equipment including scaffolding was stored in the building.

A damage figure has not been calculated but will include a destroyed work bench and extensive smoke and heat damage to the building.

Fire Chief Jim Coulson said the fire may have started as a result of a spark from a torch being used in the workshop.

Budget cuts in contract

The 1981 Halton Regional Police capital budget of \$435,312, cut considerably from its preliminary figure has been further trimmed to \$364,939.

Members of the Regional Administration and Finance Committee reviewing both the operating and capital budgets of the force also recommended not to include the capital budget as part of the 1981 operating budget.

Several councillors including Burlington Mayor Roly Bird and John Allingham said they were not totally in favor of debenturing out works projects in light of unpleasant surprises in the past with the Halton Regional deficit of 1979.

However Chairman Jack Rafitis said the capital costs are mostly related to buildings which should last for 25 years. Therefore, he said, the committee should not place the capital costs in the operating budget and expect ratepayers to pick up all the costs in 1981.

Had the capital and operating budgets gone together it would have made for a 17.1 per cent hike in 1981 over 1980. Councillors had hoped to trim the police budget back from a 23 per cent increase to 15 per cent for 1981.

Some of the cuts made were in office furnishings and the transfer of a \$19,000 surplus.

The highest cost item in the capital budget this year is \$51,000 for a revolver range at the headquarters building in Oakville.

Painting and decorating of the "executive wing" of headquarters was cut in half from the \$10,000 suggested.

Most of the other funds will go to completing work on the new Georgetown headquarters. Highest price item here is \$14,556.09 for video equipment.

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Health program expands in schools

Four people in Halton's four member municipalities will be added to the pediculosis branch of the health office to upgrade the head lice inspection of school children.

The total cost of the program would be \$4,620. Milton would have one person two days per week as would Georgetown.

Halton Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Peter Cole, said the money for upgrading the service will come from a \$5,205 surplus in another account.

Dr. Cole says he wants to use lay persons in the program as "they will likely give us the most service at the least cost."

He also added nurses are not required for the

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Grand River Regional grant

Halton will contribute \$17,994.77 to the operation of the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Halton is covered by 15 per cent of Milton and two per cent of Halton Hills which falls within the watershed of the conservation authority.

Ron Fox, speaking to the Regional Administration and Finance Committee, said the area covered has seen population grow from 556,493 in 1960 to 661,990 in 1981 for a one per cent growth.

The Halton population in the watershed area rose from 4,086 in 1960 to 4,304 in 1981 for a five per cent increase.

The total general levy of the authority has gone up 10 per cent from \$2,347,058 in 1980 to \$2,582,830 in 1981.

Mayor starts race

Mayor Gord Krantz will be the official starter for the fourth Maple Leaf-Brian Kerr Memorial 10K Classic Road (Running) Race.

The race will be held Aug. 23 at 10 a.m. and begins and finishes at the Milton Optimist Centre.

Race organizers have sought for and received permission to hold the race and have also asked for a fire truck to be used at and around the course.

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