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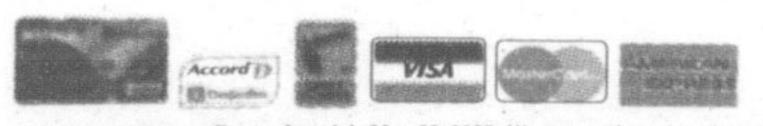
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Town's taxes could jump up 8% in 2008

Budget process begins

By Stephanie Hounsell CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Residents can expect to pay anytaxes next year, and will now play the waiting game as the Town's 2008 budget process begins.

A budget call report — which outlines what the anticipated tax increase will be for the next year and sets directions for staff in preparing the budget - went before council Monday night.

Town director of corporate services and treasurer Linda Leeds told council a 9.36 per cent tax hike would be necessary next year to maintain existing service levels as well as a five per cent increase in 2009.

But council directed staff to prepare packages showing what the operating budget would look like at a maximum of an eight per cent increase (\$55.67 more for urban residents and \$45.97 more for rural based on a \$300,000 assessment), as well as with no tax increase, a three per cent tax hike (\$20.88 more for urban residents and \$17.24 more for rural) and a five per cent increase (urban, \$34.79 and rural, \$28.73).

To get down to a zero per cent

increase, staff would have to look at reductions in various services, Leeds told council.

Amongst the items driving up the 2008 operating budget are staff wages, new debt payments, the cost of inflawhere up to eight per cent more in tion and a decrease in funding from provincial grants.

Ward 3 councillor Jan Mowbray said it's a waste of Town staff's time to have to crunch the numbers for a zero per cent increase.

"It seems like it's a ridiculous exercise to put staff through," Mowbray

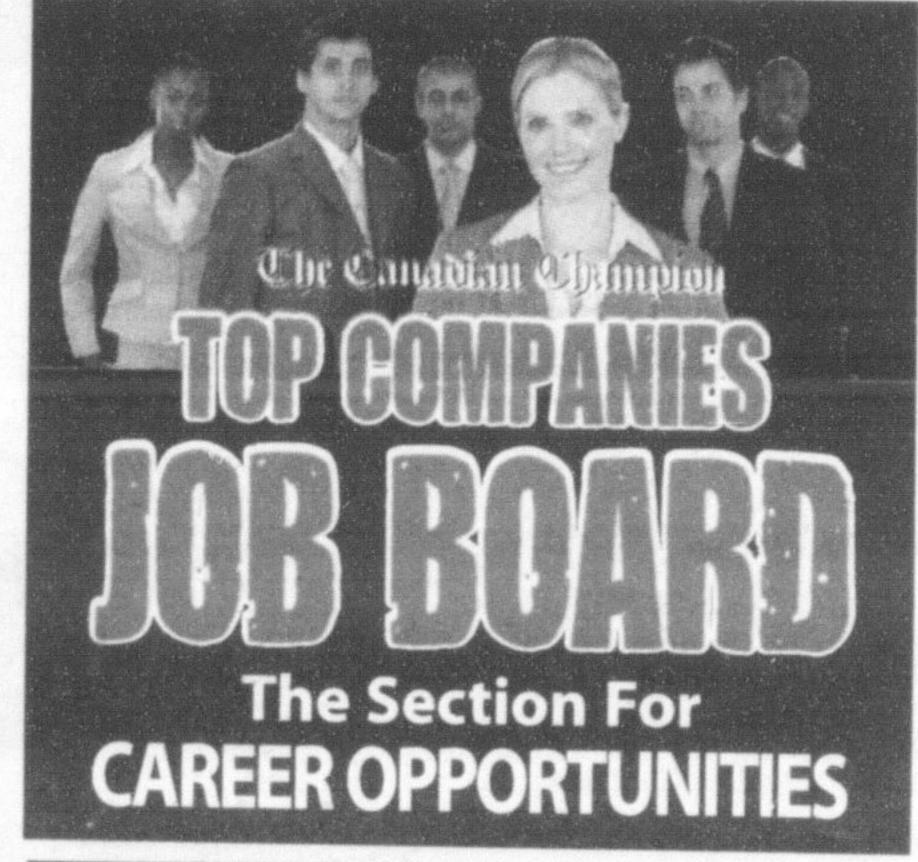
She put forward a motion to that effect, but it failed.

Council also approved a recommendation that the \$738,000 funding received from the Region of Halton for 2007 GTA Pooling be included as a funding source in preparing the capital budget.

At this point, it's expected budget packages will go out to the budget committee by November 26, and the committee will meet for deliberations December 11.

Final council approval of the budget could be given December 17.

Stephanie Hounsell can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

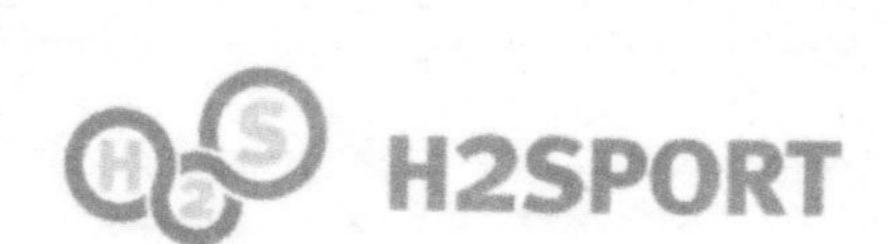


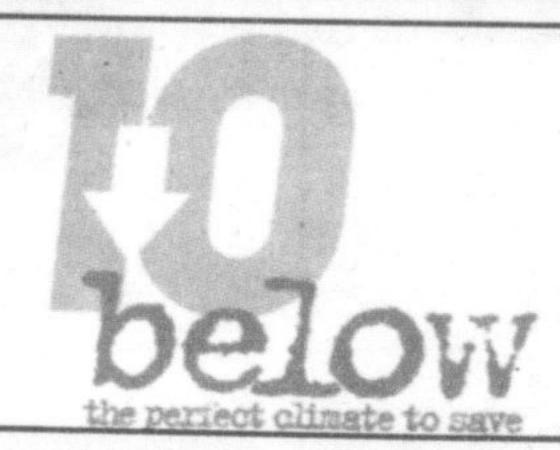




















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