

Region budget rise just 1.6%

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Mr. Sparling acknowledged. "In this particular case, I want to compliment the chairman of the board (Mr. Quinn)."

"There was an obvious dedication on the part of the chair of the police services board," added Burlington councillor Joyce Savoline.

Mr. Quinn's police reduction package included cutting back \$95,000 in overtime provisions, taking \$80,000 out of the vehicle and headquarters maintenance fund, shrinking staff overhead by attrition (\$75,000), reducing the equipment and training budget by \$75,000 and transferring \$75,000 from a reserve fund to help finance the \$175,000 purchase of new patrol cars.

Halton's \$800,000 reduction plan involves using \$250,000 in unexpected land development fees to pay down debt on the \$30 million regional centre in Oakville, deferring \$400,000 in financing for long-term capital projects, and a wage freeze in 1993 for both unionized and non-union employees. If regional management is able to pull it off, the freeze will save \$100,000. A \$55,000 pay equity plan is also being shelved for a year.

Councillors flip-flopped on what had originally been presented as a plan to cut \$150,400 in financing for community service agencies. First they reinstated half, then the remaining \$75,200. Putting the last \$75,200 back drove the regional tax hike up to 1.6 per cent instead of the planned 1.5 per cent, although regional treasurer Joe Rinaldo partially offset that by scrounging another \$17,100 in cuts from various programs.

Mr. Sparling said the agonizing over the community group grants should serve as a signal to the organizations. "We put them on notice. In the future it may be more difficult for us to find the dollars."

Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy said he is drafting a plan

for a comprehensive review of regional funding priorities. He has made it clear he wants the regional role in financing community groups re-examined as part of that exercise.

"I believe the public is asking us for less government as well as less costly government," Mr. Pomeroy said.

Burlington Mayor Walter Mulke-wich differed. "What the public is saying is that they can't pay anymore. I don't think that means they want less government. They want good government and they don't want their taxes to go up."

"Everybody I discussed the issue with said they want less government and less spending," Mr. Sparling countered. With a nod toward Mr. Mulke-wich, he added, "we must travel in different circles."

"As mayor I travel in all circles," Mr. Mulke-wich replied. "We listen differently."

The regional operating budget, which is funded by the tax levy, is approximately \$131 million. After various revenues are taken into account, the property tax bill shared among Halton residents will be \$57.7 million in 1993.

Big Brothers

Only child at home needs companion

Many boys like eight-year-old Sam are waiting for a Big Brother. Sam's father lives on the east coast and, with the high cost of travel, only sees him once a year.

He has an older brother and sister who no longer live at home and he's finding it lonely being the only child.

His mother feels that the attention he requires is different than what she is capable of giving. She hopes a Big Brother can provide her son with the male companionship and direction he needs.

Sam is an outgoing and energetic boy who enjoys physical activities and the outdoors. He has a special interest in animals, and one day would like to own a dog.

He's interested in joining some sports teams this spring, but could use encouragement and help with some of the skills that may be required in the particular sport.

Sam is thrilled with the idea of having a Big Brother to spend time with and to share his thoughts and dreams.

Anyone interested in becoming a Big Brother or learning more about the agency, can call 847-7267.



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