

Town's 1986 budget hits by 7.6%

When the 1,995 homeowners in the Town of Penetanguishene go to pay their first installment of their taxes for 1986, at the end of July, they will be faced with a 7.6 per cent tax hike over last year.

During Town council's regular monthly session last night, the members gave the go ahead to strike the budget, prepared by the municipality's Administration and Finance Committee, calling for a percentage increase that works out to be an increase \$71.40 for a public school support with a \$3,500 assessment, a \$91.80 jump over last year for a \$4,500 assessment and a \$122.40 hike for a \$6,000 assessment.

Administration and Finance Committee Chairman Don McNee told council in spite of efforts to keep spending down with drastic cuts, the Town's gross expenditure went up a staggering \$628,000 compared to only \$344,000 in 1985.

Cuts totalling \$300,000 were made to the budget before last night. With a 33 percent increase in overall budget requests by the various departments of the Town, the committee was faced with the task of making the cuts bringing down the increase to only 7.6 per

cent.

Three major factors were attributed to the increase in total expenditures from \$3.9 million in 1985 to \$4.6 million this year. Increases in municipal levies by the Protestant Separate School Board, the Roman Catholic School Board and the Public School Board are responsible for \$120,000 of the climb in expenditures along with another increase of the same amount in recreation and community services.

The most substantial hike comes from within the municipality itself. In last night's budget an additional \$320,000 was budgeted for the Town's Public Works Department.

"The municipality has a very active construction program in place this year, \$245,000 will be spent on the total reconstruction of Poyntz Street (from Main to Owen) and a new road next to the Arena will be constructed this summer for \$120,000," said McNee.

In a press conference yesterday afternoon before council's meeting Administrator Yvon Gagne said another reason behind the hike for the Public Works budget is a large amount of money has been set aside for the

maintenance of the roads in the Town.

With excess of \$3.3 million already being poured into the reconstruction of sanitary sewers and roads in the north end of the Town since the North End Sanitary Sewer system since work began three years ago, another \$2.3 million worth of sewer projects is planned for the Town, according to McNee.

When this last phase of sewers is finished the municipality will be completely serviced with sanitary sewers.



Don McNee

McNee added the Town owes particular thanks to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment who subsidized much of the cost for the projects.

Despite the fact that the 7.6 percent increase is higher percentage wise, than some of the neighbouring municipalities' budgets struck this year, Town Treasurer Shirley Bellehumeur said the dollar increase is comparable to other budgets.

According to the Treasurer, increases in the budgets of the individual departments received on average an eight percent increase over last year. Although the committee would have like to have been able to meet all the budget requests, it would be an impossible burden on the residents.

McNee said he was pleased with what his committee was able to do with his first budget as chairman of finance and added that even with the many cut-backs, the Town is not standing still at 7.6 percent.

Penetang Mayor Ron Bellisle said during the meeting last night the finance committee had worked very hard on the budget with 7.6 being the lowest percent possible for the Town to still maintain the level of service being offered in the municipality.

Angels examined for needed restoration

Penetanguishene's angels, that have a very special meaning to many of the Town's residents for both sentimental and historical reasons, are even more special than people realize.

Yesterday morning, after a preliminary examination of the statues that were erected at the entrance of Penetang in 1921, Metal Conservator, Craig Johnson of Ottawa said the statues could be rarer than originally thought.

Although Johnson is not definite, he said it appears the two identical figurines could be made of cast aluminum and not bronze like it is believed.

"Aluminum cast statues were not common by any means in 1921," said Johnson who was in Penetang Sunday and yesterday to study the angels to see how much work would be involved in repairing the angels that were a gift to the Town 65 years ago from Father Gerald Lahey.

Johnson, one of five sculpture restorers in Canada, said it is obvious from his preliminary study of the statues they have been well taken care of over the years by the local officials.

"Rather than just discarding the statues, the Town has been wise to keep them up, they are very rare," said Johnson.

Although the conservator will not have a report ready for Penetanguishene Heritage, who are responsible for getting Johnson to the area, for another two or three weeks he added he will probably

recommend the removal and complete restoration of the angels.

"I will probably recommend that the older repairs already made to the statues be replaced with more detailed work to what they originally were," said the conservator.

After years of repairing the statues, the Town's Heritage committee now want the angels properly restored to their original state.

Johnson added if he takes the job it will probably take a year or longer for the work to be completed. He could take them one at a time or take them both and have them returned together depending on the Town's decision.

With a video tape taken yesterday, documenting the conditions of the angels, once back in Ottawa Johnson will go over it with a fine tooth comb and re-examine them thoroughly before making his final report to the Heritage committee outlining what work needs to be done and the estimated costs.

The pair, marked in 1921 as Ontario and Quebec to symbolize the harmony between the French and English cultures in Penetang, over the years have been damaged by weather conditions.

Johnson added it is not difficult to tell that at one point or another, both of the angels have been seriously damaged as a result of being knocked from their pedestals.

The Ottawa conservator did not estimate the cost of the work with more study on the angels having to be completed before a price is set.



Angel action

Metal Conservator Craig Johnson of Ottawa spent yesterday carefully examining the Penetanguishene angels. With video machine in hand Johnson

went over the statues to evaluate the work necessary for restoring the gift to the Town in 1921.