

# Pensions, fire calls lead to tax hike

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approach the task of ironing out the budget Tuesday, they will face a number of serious and unavoidable challenges, including a marked increase in the cost of running Whitchurch-Stouffville fire and emergency services, Mrs. Sherban said.

"As an example of rising costs, we'll likely increase our number of full-time firefighters from six to 10," she said.

The operating budget will definitely take some extra attention this year, the mayor said. About \$200,000 must be carved out to pay for contributions to the town's employee pension fund. The town's 84 full-time

employees will also contribute \$200,000 to the fund.

Property owners receive one bill showing a three-way itemized tax account incorporating municipal, regional and education services. The municipality acts as the tax collector.

If council approves the proposed tax increase, it will represent the first double digit tax hike in many years in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

From 2001 to 2003, taxes went up an average of 2.5 per cent each year, while Whitchurch-Stouffville council imposed a tax freeze from 1995 to 2000 with the exception of 1998, when there was a slight increase.



**SUE SHERBAN:** Full-time employees also contributing to municipal pension fund this year.

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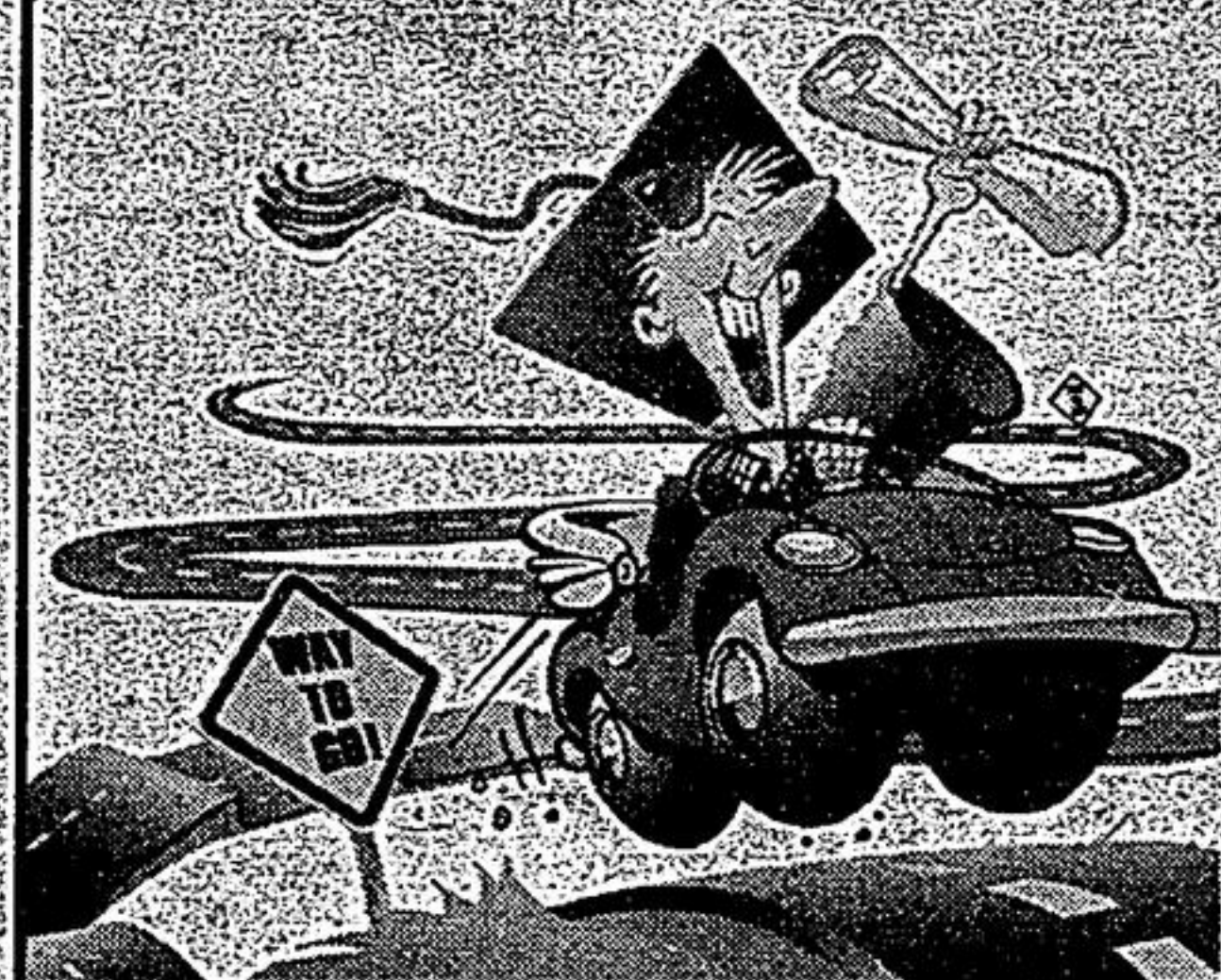
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