

# Library board asks for 9.4% boost

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closer to 3 per cent and "to do it while maintaining our current service levels and continuing to invest to meet the needs of the growing population," he said.

"By comparison, the City of Toronto is looking at a 3-per-cent tax increase, but with significant cuts to programs and services. I believe we can do much better than that here," Mr. Smith added.

A \$1,055,453 grant to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library is also proposed in this year's budget.

The library board's request for a 9.4-per-cent increase from its 2011 budget will help buy more materials to cope with the town's population increase as well as a greater demand for more downloadable e-books and audio books.

The funds will help support a staffing increase of one position from 80 per cent to full time to address the increased demand for children's programming. Whitchurch-Stouffville library CEO Carolyn Nordheimer James said.

Residents lobbied council to fast-track the library's expansion, now set for 2015.

The draft budget has the expansion slated for 2014 with the design to be done in 2013.

However, due to the library board requesting an expansion that is larger by 5,000 square feet than originally planned — from 10,000 to 15,000 square feet — and higher construction costs, the project is anticipated to cost \$6 million.

It was expected to cost \$3 million, according to the 2012 draft budget report.

During an October public information meeting, along with the library expansion,

residents brought forward a myriad of suggested services they would like the town to provide, including a BMX track.

The track was not included in the town's 2008 leisure facility strategy, therefore, there is no costing included in the capital forecast, according to the budget report, but that does not mean there will never be a track.

"It's up to council to instruct staff," said Marc Pourvahidi, the town's treasurer and director of finance.

"I don't know where council stands. ... Even if council agreed to proceed, it will take two years to proceed to find a location, budget and construction."

An improved skateboard park remains on the want list of residents, too.

According to the budget report, it has been a part of the redevelopment plans of Memorial Park the past few years.

A 55+/wellness seniors centre will be in the town building and has a design and construction cost of \$2.86 million in the budget.

The town's department heads requested 16 new staff positions. Only eight were recommended by chief administrative officer Dave Cash, according to the budget report.

Those include a seniors programmer for leisure services and a fire prevention/public information officer and two firefighters to staff the Ballantrae fire hall full time by 2014.

"The additional personnel will provide management with enhanced day-to-day operational flexibility as well as reduce the requirement for potential overtime in 2012 and 2013," according to the budget report.

Final budget approval will be discussed Jan. 24 at a special council meeting that begins at 9 a.m. in council chambers, 111 Sandiford Dr.

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