



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

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REPORT #: CS-24-015

COMMITTEE DATE: 2024-09-24

DUE IN COUNCIL: 2024-09-24

REPORT TO: Council

SUBJECT: 2025 Budget Timeline

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 Council approve the 2025 budget timeline presented in Appendix I to this report; and,
- 1.2 Council direct staff to include an incremental increased transfer of \$150,000 to the Capital Reserve to be considered for 2025 Budget Planning.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Municipalities must prepare and adopt a balanced budget annually, per the Municipal Act, 2001.
- In preparation for the 2025 budget process, Staff prepared a budget schedule for Council's consideration. Staff recommend this timeline, attached as Appendix I, be approved by Council and followed for 2025 budget deliberations.
- The timeline recommends two (2) meetings for Capital, three (3) meetings for Operating, two (2) meetings for rate supported budgets (water and wastewater rates), one (1) meeting dedication to Community Partners and Local Boards, and one (1) meeting for Budget Finalization and approval.
- Guidance will be sought at the first meeting, scheduled for October 10, 2024.
- A 1% increase in the Town's 2025 Operating Budget is equivalent to \$161,120.
- A transfer to Capital of an additional \$150,000 per year to support asset management and replacement initiatives will bring the total capital support from the tax levy to \$2,720,000.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval on the 2025 budget timeline.

4. BACKGROUND

In accordance with Section 290 of the Municipal Act, a local municipality must prepare and adopt a balanced budget every year. Budget documents are prepared annually through staff submissions, discussions with senior staff and the CAO, and final compilation by the Finance department. The overall goal is to produce a budget that is responsible, transparent, and accountable.

5. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

This meeting structure will result in eight (8) budget deliberation meetings:

- two (2) Capital meetings
- three (3) Operating meetings
- one (1) Rate meeting
- one (1) meeting for Community Partners and Local Boards
- one (1) meeting for final budget approval

As in prior years, if Council wishes to meet more often than proposed, additional meetings will be added to the timetable with final approval pushed into the new year.

In the past several years, Council has been increasing the transfer to Capital at \$150,000 per year to support asset management and replacement initiatives. An additional \$150,000 will bring the total capital support from the tax levy to \$2,720,000.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN

The budget is a guiding document that supports Council's Strategic Plan or other initiatives that come forward through the year.

7. OPTIONS

- 7.1 Option 1: Council approves the timeline (**Recommended**)
- 7.2 Option 2: Council amends the timeline (*Not Recommended*)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget is a guiding financial document for the year and determines the Town's goals and priorities. Several items will impact the overall outcome of the 2025 budget. Staff will be determining the impact of these items on the 2025 budget in the coming months.

Some drivers of the budget include:

- 2024 Business Case Phase-In – A number of business cases were only partially phased in for 2024 to reduce the impact on the 2024 budget.
- Increases to maintain existing levels of service and day-to-day operations, such as utilities, insurance, and regular inflation.
- Standard increases laid out in the Employee Bargaining Agreement.
- Strategic Plan Priorities
- Increase the transfer to Capital by an additional \$150,000 bringing the total capital support from the tax levy to \$2,720,000.

For the 2025 Operating Levy, 1% is equivalent to a \$161,120 increase in expenditures.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

Upon Council's approval, the attached timeline will be circulated to Community Partners and local boards. The community will have the opportunity to participate in the budget process by providing their input and feedback through a budget survey accessible on the Town's engagement platform. The results will be compiled and presented to Council for their review and consideration.

11. CONCLUSION

Staff are looking forward to the 2024 budget deliberations. Following the attached timeline will ensure milestones and discussions occur to deliver a timely 2025 budget.

12. PREVIOUS REPORTS

N/A

13. APPENDICES

- Appendix I – Proposed 2025 Budget Timeline

Respectfully submitted:

Prepared by:



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Submitted by:



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