

COUNCIL MEMBERS' STATED POSITIONS ON THE ANNUAL BUDGET AND MUNICIPAL FINANCES

The public is only aware of the proposed budget one month before Council sets the budget, and thus tax rate. How would you change this time line?

OR

What would you do to allow the public more input into setting the budget?

Milt McIver - *The current approach is to advertise three public meetings to attract public interest. In 2014, the first meeting was held on March 3rd, the second on March 10th at which time we made changes that emerged from the previous meeting. At the third meeting, two weeks later, we passed the by-law to approve the budget; however there was still time at that meeting to present changes. The new Council may look at a different process.*

If re-elected, I would initiate discussions with the new Council to seek their input on how to encourage public participation in the budget process.

Patricia Greig - *I have always been an advocate for broader consultation on the budget. As a minimum the budget process could begin in the fall so that there is ample time for a thorough discussion. The budget is the one document that truly reflects the priorities of the Municipality and any program that makes it easier for people to understand the financial challenges would have my support.*

Tom Boyle – *The public is aware of the proposed municipal budget at the same time that is it presented to the Council. The process of approval usually takes about four or five weeks and is usually presented again at two or more additional publicized special meetings with document edits based on consideration of public and Council comments and motions. The draft budget for a fiscal year which begins on January 1 is a complete document that compares actuals from previous years and necessarily includes projected operational revenue and expense. Included are the anticipated costs of all recommended capital items and an accounting of capital reserves. Late additions added to the consideration can be the policing request and letters requesting funding from community groups.*

The public should be encouraged to communicate their specific needs and desires to Staff and Council throughout the year or at least early on in the budget drafting process. The policing costs should be known in a timelier manner. Preliminary long term forecasts of capital expenses/projects could be presented prior to the annual draft budget presentation. This could also be done with a consideration of reserve funds in the context of future needs and expectations. For the 2015 budget the new Council will need to review these capital numbers with consideration given to the Asset Management Report and the new Road Needs Study. All the more reason to get started as soon as possible.

Rob Rouse – *No reply to SEPO questionnaire instead,....the following is from his pre-election website*

Rising Costs of Policing: The municipality has yet to receive it's detailed costing estimates from the OPP, but it has the potential to add \$200k annually for the next four years,

more than doubling what we currently pay. This is an estimated increase of roughly 4% annually. As is often the case, Queen's Park is punishing rural Ontario for the cost of offering services in urban Ontario. Our municipality has an obligation to vehemently oppose this situation, and there are opportunities to investigate cost sharing opportunities with community partners.

Griffin Salen – I see no issue with having the complete process transparent. As members of Council, it is the tax payer's money being spent so therefore the entire budget setting process should be disclosed to them. A possible solution to this problem is making a preliminary budget that is easily accessible, getting thorough public input, and then reconsidering publicly disputed issues.