

Planning and Community Development Committee

Introductory Remarks

The Planning and Community Development Committee has stewardship of the following budgets: Planning, Civic Addressing, Agriculture, Forestry, Trails, Economic Development, Tourism and Grey Roots. The budgets have been drafted in recognition of the [Grey County Approved Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-2015](#).

In addition, the budget development has been guided by a number of approved policies such as the Transportation Services Review, Recreational Trails' Strategy, Grey Roots Marketing Plan, Interpretive Plan and Business Plan, Tourism Destination Development Action Plan and the Economic Development Study.

Overview

The 2015 draft budget has total expenditures of \$6,986,873 and requires a net levy contribution of \$4,192,355, which is an increase of \$387,050 being a 10.17% increase over the 2014 budget, which translates to a corporate net levy increase of 0.74%.

Of the \$387,050 increase, \$259,000 is directly related to Council's key strategic initiative of economic development. Within the \$259,000 there is \$216,000 directed to support the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus initiative to kick start fibre to the home for internet connectivity in all of southwestern Ontario (Southwest Integrated Fibre Technology – SWIFT project). Another \$43,000 is dedicated towards implementation of the County's soon to be finalized economic development strategy.

Planning

The Planning budget consists of three specific components: Planning (General) Operating, Civic Addressing and Planning Capital. The Planning Operating budget includes a requested levy contribution of \$653,076 which is an increase of \$29,701 over 2014.

The Planning Capital budget includes a transfer to reserves of \$21,000 with \$11,000 of the transfer being requested as the levy contribution. The transfer to reserves is to fund a portion of future studies that were identified in the five year capital forecast and the

development charges background study. The details of the capital budget are as follows:

- \$3,000 transfer to reserves to fund a portion of updating the data contained in the Housing Study (2015 project).
- \$4,000 transfer to reserves to fund a portion of a future Growth Management Study update (2019/2020 project).
- \$4,000 transfer to reserves to fund part of a future multi-function plotter replacement
- \$10,000 transfer to reserves from the Planning Legal Reserves to fund part of a future Archaeological Master Plan (proposed 2017 project).

The Planning Capital budget includes a carry-over of funds for the continuation and completion of the Transportation Master Plan, the Natural Heritage Systems Study, the Planning Application Tracking Software (to be completed by a contract Information Technology staff person), and the Growth Management Study Update. The Capital budget includes a carry-over of funds received from the provincial government for the implementation of the Source Protection Plans as well as a collaborative Source Protection Implementation project referred to as 'RMO/RMI in a Box' and the 'Property Tracking System'.

The Capital budget also includes funds to complete the Abandoned Landfills Study as well as an additional expense to have the consultant prepare a digital catalogue of all the background information catalogued by each landfill site and by municipality. It is recommended that the additional funds be funded from the Waste Management Reserve to be consistent with how the original project has been funded which results in no impact to the levy.

Agriculture

The Agriculture budget includes the management of the County's Forest Management By-law (which is performed under contract with the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority), beaver and coyote control, and funding to organizations that support the agricultural industry, including the Grey County Agricultural Services and the Grey County 4-H. The draft 2015 budget proposes a levy commitment of \$143,280 which is an increase of \$5,780.

Forestry

The Forestry budget includes the management of the County's 45 forest properties, which includes harvesting through good forestry practices as well as trail development and maintenance of trails within the County forests. The County Forests are managed by the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority under contract with the County. The draft 2015 General Forestry budget proposes total expenditures of \$125,440 which is offset

by the projected forestry revenue of \$250,000 from tree harvesting, and a transfer from reserves of \$35,000.

A total of \$35,000 is proposed to be transferred from the Forestry Reserve to fund the spraying of tent caterpillar in some of the forest tracts that are showing signs of distress due to a tent caterpillar infestation detected in 2014 (\$15,000), as well as funds to begin the update of the Forest Management Plan (\$20,000) which is proposed to be updated over the next two to three years with the cost to update the Plan being spread out over that time period. Based on the total proposed expenditures and revenue for the 2015 Forestry Operating budget it is estimated that there will be an overall surplus of \$159,560.

The Forestry Trails Operating budget includes funds to maintain and develop trails in the County Forests. The draft 2015 budget proposes a levy commitment of \$53,946 which is a decrease of \$1,654. The Forestry Trails budget includes an increase of \$2,500 in order to fund the spraying of Wild Chervil which is present in at least one of the County Forest tracts. Based on the General Forestry Operating budget and the Forestry Trails budget, the total net levy impact is a surplus of \$105,614 which is an increase of \$59,814 surplus compared to the 2014 budget.

Trails

The Trails budget covers the management of the CP Rail Trail. The Rail Trail Bridge and Culvert Inspection Report conducted in 2011 identified a number of structures in need of repair. The 2015 CP Trail Capital budget includes funds for the rehabilitation of Culvert 9 which is located on a section of the CP Rail Trail in the Municipality of Meaford. The total net levy requirement for the CP Rail Trail Operating and Capital Budget is \$138,360 which is an increase of \$2,085.

Intelligent Community / Broadband

The Connected County (Intelligent Community) work will continue in 2015 with \$92,640 funded from one time reserve and cost recoveries. A successful master class delivered by Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) founder, Robert Bell in November of 2014 identified numerous activities that support Grey County taking advantage of broadband to become an Intelligent Community.

Broadband has been identified as a key infrastructure to compete in the global economy. \$216,000 funded from the levy is allocated towards Grey County's contribution to the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) regional SWIFT project which is dedicated to ramp up the level of service of broadband technology in southwestern Ontario. SWIFT is a long term vision for a sustainable system that will fund fibre to the home (and business) for all the residents in the WOWC area including Grey County. The budget has also allocated \$1,000,000 in a reserve for expansion of

broadband in the County that will align with the SWIFT project. An additional \$50,000 from reserve will be used to hire resources to create a plan to best leverage the \$1,000,000 reserve and get broadband deployed quickly in Grey County.

Economic Development

Grey County's Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan will be finalized in the first quarter of 2015, and will include orientation for County Council and staff, and an investment readiness assessment. This will be completed with unspent provincial and reserve funds moved forward from 2014 (estimated at \$22,000.) While the main themes and high level actions have been identified, the final plan with specific implementation actions and costs will be finished in March, after further input from stakeholders. The 2015 budget requests an investment of \$43,000 for beginning implementation of high priority actions that will be identified. A portion of these funds will purchase a data package (\$2,400) to provide on-going tracking of the detailed data gathered in the strategy. There is also an opportunity to apply for further RED (Rural Economic Development) program funding to offset or further leverage this investment, once the actions are known.

As proposed in the Five Year Capital Forecast, an ongoing amount of \$15,000 is being built into the annual budget to enable ongoing updates to the County's Economic Development Strategy every five years. In addition, \$5,000 has been added for video/photography. The requested levy contribution for economic development general operating budget is \$374,505, an increase of \$74,160.

Tourism

The Tourism budget comprises Grey County's General Operating budget, as well as several regional tourism budgets, RTMP (Regional Tourism Marketing Partners), and Fall Conference and Brochure Swap. Grey County had been the banker for the Georgian Bay Partnership for many years but has passed this responsibility to Simcoe County.

Grey County's General Tourism Operating budget has a requested net levy increase of \$27,275 to \$475,085. Much of this increase results from the 2014 Non-Union External Salary Review, and \$8,000 towards the Destination Development Action Plan. There is a \$2,000 net increase in all regional budgets to a total net levy of \$38,000, for a total investment in tourism of \$513,085.

Major initiatives in 2015 are launching tourism's re-developed website (\$10,000), finishing up and implementing a new marketing plan (\$5,000), and working with the Transportation Services Department on a Grey County signage criteria study (\$49,500), which are all funded from carry-over funds from 2014. A significant initiative which was outlined in the 2015-2019 Capital Forecast is updating the Tourism Destination

Development Action Plan (DDAP) at an expected cost of \$40,000, with \$32,000 of this funded from Reserve.

Grey County's Tourism Destination Development Action Plan (DDAP) was completed in May 2010, and identified 16 recommendations under four pillars. Over the past four years, Grey County Tourism, guided by the Tourism Committee and its replacement, the Tourism Advisory Committee has substantially completed the actions identified under these recommendations, and can point to many successes. The existing plan created many "tools in the toolbox" which need to be reviewed and refreshed for today's needs. Just after the DDAP was finished, Ontario instituted Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) which have greatly changed how tourism partners work together. Finally, the existing DDAP pre-dated Grey County's Strategic Plan and there is a need for better alignment with corporate goals and actions.

At the same time, Grey County created an economic development department and mandate, and is now embarking on an overall economic development strategy and action plan. This economic strategy has identified several themes and tourism as one of the key sectors. Beneath the strategy will be implementing action plans for each theme and key sectors. Updating the DDAP is seen as the action plan for tourism, and will focus on how Grey County can further develop as Ontario's recreation jewel.

Grey Roots

The Grey Roots draft budget includes a requested levy contribution of \$2,248,663 which is an increase of \$106,863 over the 2014 net levy. Revenue projections for 2015 remain consistent with what was budgeted in 2014. The budget as presented continues to build on the strong programming offered by Grey Roots.

The other main thrust of the 2015 budget is to complete capital projects currently underway and use 2015 as a year to properly plan for projects through architectural and engineering design and costing of capital projects in the village. In the past estimates have not always been based on architectural drawings, or costs have been discounted based on receiving in-kind support from local businesses. This has resulted in estimates being lower than required putting pressure on staff to make requests to access reserves to fund overages.

In addition, experience has shown that technology upgrades for the theatre can be costly, so the budget includes the beginning of what will be a \$5,000 annual transfer to reserve to avoid costly budget fluctuations in the future.

Several capital projects begun in 2014 have not been completed and are being brought forward to 2015. One project is \$35,000 for an augmented reality app and tablets. This will enable visitors to download an app to their phone, or use county owned devices to enhance their experience. For example, when outside the log house, a person will be

able to see and hear Mrs. O'Hara talking about the trials and tribulations of moving from Ireland to Grey County.

A few minor components that have been approved for the logo sculpture will also be completed at an estimated cost of \$9,800. There is more work to be done to complete the sculpture as envisaged by the architect, but this has not been budgeted in 2015 as the value of in-kind support has not been quantified and there is the possibility that the amount could be greater if the contractor can do some of the work over the winter months. Additionally, staff would like to explore other options which may be more cost effective. The cost of finishing the sculpture as proposed and identified in Report CCR-PCD-17-14 is approximately \$31,000 and estimates now have raised this amount by an additional \$5,500 (including a \$1,300 contingency). Only work authorized by Council will be completed on this project.

Additionally, all of the budgeted work related to the agricultural exhibit building was not completed in 2014 as the same contractor won the bid to correct deficiencies with the sawmill and the coordination of the two projects made it difficult to complete all work anticipated in 2014.

The complete listing of capital projects for 2015 is as follows:

- Capital Improvements for Main Building (\$99,500) and Village Buildings (\$33,000) in accordance with building condition assessments
- Grey Roots Video - \$16,500
- Pre Engineering/Architectural for various proposed heritage buildings - \$40,000
- Collection Management Plan preparation - \$8,400 for student preparing data
- Consulting to evaluate and recommend update to Grey County Gallery - \$50,000
- Finish Agricultural Exhibit Building – \$88,700 (portion brought forward from 2014)
- Repay Grey Roots Reserve (2014 over expenditure of Sawmill) - \$36,000 (estimate)
- Construct an Orange Lodge - \$220,800 to be fully funded by community and construction timing dependent upon completion of fund raising
- Augmented Reality App - \$35,000 (project brought forward from 2014 and RFP awarded in late December)
- Logo Sculpture - \$9,800 (project brought forward from 2014)
- The debenture for Grey Roots was paid off in 2014 and the 2015 draft budget allocates \$175,000 of the debenture payment towards capital for Grey Roots. The majority of this has been allocated towards reserve to provide for future capital maintenance of the main building and heritage

village buildings as identified in the building condition assessments. The remaining \$175,207 has been allocated to the Administration/POA Building Expansion Reserve earmarked for the expansion/renovation of the County Administration Building.

Summary

The budgets under the care and control of the Planning and Community Development Committee have been drafted in keeping with Council's priorities, particularly economic development. These strategic investments will help provide a steady foundation for ensuring the social and economic wellbeing of Grey County's residents into the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene Wright
Chair, Planning and Community Development Committee