



2019 BUDGET - OBJECTIVES

Objectives for the 2019 Budget:

The 2019 budget was extremely difficult for Council this year. Growth in the Municipality has been relatively stagnant for a few years now, meaning our tax base is not growing, and the burden falls on all of us to cover rising costs. The cost of living increases need to be covered, so the Council has raised taxes by 2.5% this year. It doesn't get us ahead but it ensures we aren't falling further behind in expenses. We have limited our projects this year to only the essentials, as the projects we do have are large, and we don't want to overextend in case of volatile pricing.

Despite our best intentions in 2018, some of the projects we had planned for last year had to be shelved due to budget constraints. Unfortunately, the tender prices we received for most of our bigger projects were significantly higher than what we had planned for, based on the estimates of our professionals. We weren't alone in this, many of our neighbouring municipalities also complained last year of sharply increasing contracts. The most important of these projects was the new town hall and repairs to Lake Louisa North Road.

We are currently reworking the plans for the town hall to cut costs and hope to retender the project with work to begin in the spring. I know to some of you this project may not seem essential but the existing building has reached a critical point where it would need a major renovation and addition just to remain functional and the construction costs would be similar to the new building.

The road repairs planned for Lake Louisa North were to be spread out over three years; however the Phase 1 prices last fall came in at 50% over estimates. The Council decided to delay the project until after construction of the town hall when we can better access our financial stability and then move forward with the project in a single phase. This should give us a better idea of total costs and limit the inconvenience to residents to one year of repairs.

We have a few other smaller projects planned for 2019. A study will be made of the outlet of Lake Louisa to assess the repairs needed to the spillway to ensure the stable level of the water in the lake. A reconfiguration is planned for the intersection of Dunany and Boyd Roads to improve security and visibility. This project has been discussed for over 10 years and we are hoping to realize it this year with the collaboration and financial support of the MTQ. And finally, we will be purchasing some equipment for our newly established public works department. The addition of a truck and multi-functional tractor will allow us to take on more of the jobs that we usually put out to contract, which will offer a better service for our citizens.

Anyone wanting to stay up to date with our projects throughout the year are welcome to join us at our regular Council meetings, at the Mayor's Breakfasts, held a few times a year, and at our Annual Wentworth Day, where we can provide further updates on the Municipality's endeavors and answer questions in more depth than we can in this communication.

The Budget was adopted at the special meeting held on December 17th, 2018. All the documents presented are available at the Municipal Office. Please feel free to e-mail me at (jmorrison@wentworth.ca) to discuss any details of the budget.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a Healthy and Happy Year.

Your Mayor,