



**The Corporation of the Township of Norwich
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday November 28, 2024
Council Meeting – Capital Budget**

In Attendance:

Council:

Mayor Jim Palmer
Councillor Toews
Councillor DePlancke
Councillor Gear
Councillor Couwenberg

Staff:

Lee Robinson, CAO
Kimberley Armstrong, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
James Johnson, Treasurer/Deputy CAO
Brad Smale, Director of Building Services/Chief Building Official
Ken Farkas, Director of Public Works
Derek Van Patee, Director of Fire and Protective Services
James Schaafsma, Acting Director of Community Development Services
AJ Wells, Director of Medical Services
Sean McCoy, Deputy Clerk/Planning Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Capital Budget Meeting of the 2022-2026 Council of the Township of Norwich was held in the Council Chambers, Norwich, commencing at 9:00 a.m. with Mayor Palmer presiding.

2. Approval of Agenda

Resolution #1

Moved by Karl Toews, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That the Agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures were reported.

4. Introduction

4.1 Re: Introduction Presentation

Mr. Johnson advised Council of a change on page 3 of the Executive Summary to reflect the Guiderail Program end point of Hanmer Road. He also explained that the proposed Recreation Master Plan can be 75% funded from Development Charge funds, which are to be directed towards growth related projects.

Mr. Johnson explained that the 2025 Capital Budget includes projects scheduled for 2025 as well as projects forecasted in the 10-Year Plan. Many of the planned projects are for replacement of assets which are at end of life. Staff are not proposing any additions to existing service levels. He advised that funding for Capital projects includes: the Canada Community Building Fund (formerly gas tax), Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, donations, debentures, development charges, parkland levy fees, tax levy, and reserve funds. Mr. Johnson explained that many of the reserves are not fully funded which represents an infrastructure gap. The tax levy applied to the Capital Budget goes towards debt servicing and capital reserve contributions, with projects being funded from those capital reserves.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the reserve funds and advised that reserves that are not fully funded would require further contributions or cuts would need to be made to service levels. Mr. Johnson also explained that only decreasing reserve fund contributions would reduce the levy and removing projects from the budget does not impact the levy. He further advised that this year's Capital Budget is up about 10% over last year's, which represents about a 3% increase on the overall levy for 2025 after adjusting for growth.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Johnson explained that interest earned on cash held in many reserves cannot be used towards funding the reserve, however it does get used to offset the operating budget.

There was Council discussion regarding events that impact previous years forecast estimates, the benefits of waiting for funding opportunities to initiate projects, and the importance of reserves for reducing the dependency on debentures and stabilizing the levy burden on rate payers.

5. Departmental Capital budget

5.1 2025 Draft Capital Budget and Ten Year Forecast

Mr. Johnson advised that the executive summary contains a brief summary of the 2025 capital projects for the purpose of future reference.

5.2 General Administration

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of general administration expenses.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Armstrong explained that a new electronic records management program is included in the budget due to system changes, Oxford County cost sharing increases and the County possibly moving away from the current system.

5.2 Fire and Protective Services

Chief Van Patee advised that this year's budget was set to maintain current service levels and includes equipment replacement, computer replacement, contributions to the communications system split between five municipalities, items identified in the building condition assessment and a pumper for Oxford Centre which was approved and ordered in 2023 and on track for 2025-2026 delivery.

Ms. Robinson explained that Council approves pre-purchasing for orders on assets that are delivered in later years due to delays in production for some assets. The expense is then reflected in the budget of the year the asset is delivered.

5.3 Building Services

Mr. Smale advised that this budget includes a replacement plotter and tablets for field inspections.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Smale explained that typical replacement part costs for the plotter are \$600-\$800. Since this plotter model is out of production and parts are more difficult to find.

5.4 Transportation

Mr. Farkas provided an overview of the projects in the 2025 Capital Budget, including gravel road conversions, guiderail replacements, bridges, culverts, sidewalks, parking lots, dams and equipment.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Farkas explained that for shared projects with other municipalities, the numbers in the budget represented the Township's contribution. He also explained that engineering costs included in the budget were for projects that would be carried out in 2026 in conjunction with the County that involve infrastructure like servicing and sidewalks.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Robinson explained that budget amount for the removal of the Vandecar bridge includes: removal, studies, approvals and turning circles to correctly terminate the road.

Resolution #2

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Karl Toews:

That the paving of the Norwich Operations Centre be deferred until 2026.

Carried

There was Council discussion regarding the current condition of Airport Road and other potential roads projects.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Farkas explained that Airport Road was paved with two inches of asphalt and that another layer is recommended as other roads that were similarly paved are not holding up well. Mr. Johnson explained that reserve contributions should only be reduced if the reserve is fully funded.

Recess at 10:55 a.m.
Resumed at 11:06 a.m.

Mr. Johnson explained that the budget presented is what is needed for current service levels and how contributions to reserves are necessary for ensuring sufficient funds to appropriately manage the municipality's capital assets. There was Council discussion regarding levy impacts of the Capital Budget, factors that impact year over year estimates, and the negative impacts of a 0% tax increase.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Farkas advised that the Traffic Count on Airport Road is 636 cars per day.

Resolution #3

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the Airport Road overlay project be removed from the 10-year forecast.

Carried

There was Council discussion regarding concerns about potential future servicing from the City of Woodstock impacting improvements made to John Street in Eastwood.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Farkas explained there are concerns that the asphalt will not hold up if Council defers works on John Street. Ms. Robinson further explained that if there is deterioration, Council can consider improvements at that point.

Resolution #4

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the John Street and Main Street works in Eastwood be deferred in the 2025 Capital Budget and 10-year Forecast until 2030.

Carried

Resolution #5

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the John Deere Loader be deferred until 2029.

Carried

Council recessed at 11:58 a.m.
Council resumed at 12:31 p.m.

5.5 Medical Services

Mr. Wells advised that this budget includes: items identified in the Building Condition Assessment, the furniture replacement program and the computer replacement program.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Wells explained that the Township owns all medical equipment used by the physicians at the Medical Centre.

5.6 Cemeteries

Mr. Schaafsma explained that the 2025 budget includes the parking area at the Pioneer Cemetery per the November 12th report to Council, as well as some other general maintenance projects.

5.7 Parks and Recreation

Mr. Schaafsma provide an overview of the proposed projects in the 2025 Capital Budget. In response to questions from Council, he explained that the Township could approach the user groups at the Ducky Dennis Park for feedback regarding removal of the shed and moving Township equipment into the pavilion. He also advised that at the current workload staff would not be able to complete a Recreation Master Plan in-house.

There was Council discussion regarding the Scissor Lift, Zamboni, Computer Replacement Program, hall rentals and the NCC Road Sign.

Resolution #6

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Staff be directed to prepare a report regarding the scope of the Ducky Dennis Park storage shed project.

Carried

Resolution #7

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the Scissor Lift be deferred to 2028 and further that staff prepare a report outlining inspection and maintenance requirements.

Carried

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Schaafsma explained that the digital sign is used to advertise special events and vendor sales. Remote updates to the sign are not currently possible and the update to the sign will address this.

Resolution #8

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the Digital Roadside Sign be removed from the 2025 Capital Budget.

Carried

Mr. Johnson provided closing remarks and thanked Council and staff for their efforts during the Capital Budget process. In response to questions from Council, Mr. Johnson explained that Development Charges are to be used for growth related projects and are not eligible to be used for projects or portions of projects that relate to existing service levels.

5.8 Overall Capital Budget & Executive Summary

Report FS 2024-24

Resolution #9

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That Report FS 2024-24, 2025 Capital Budget Executive Summary be received as information;

And That Council continue to approve a 2% levy increase plus inflation as a strategy to close the infrastructure gap;

And that Council approve a 4.8% Capital levy increase based on the most recent quarterly Building Construction Price Index, non-residential Toronto Region, as a strategy to close the infrastructure gap;

And Further That Council approve the Capital Levy of \$4,081,000.00 to be included in the 2025 Operating Budget deliberations.

Carried

6. By-Laws

No. 58-2024

To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council

6.1 First and Second Reading of the Following By-law(s)

Resolution #10

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That the following By-law as listed, be introduced and taken as read a first and second

time:

No. 58-2024 To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council

Carried

13.2 Third Reading of the Following By-law(s)

Resolution #11

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That By-law 58-2024 as listed, be taken as read a third and final time and passed and signed by the Deputy Mayor and Clerk and the Corporate Seal be affixed thereto.

Carried

14. Adjournment – 1:49 p.m.

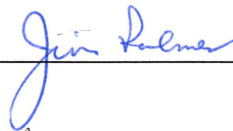
Resolution #12

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

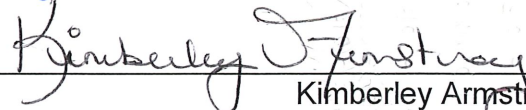
That this Council do now adjourn.

Carried

These minutes adopted by way of Resolution No. 2 as approved by Council at its meeting on the 14th day of January, 2025.



Jim Palmer
Mayor



Kimberley Armstrong
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk