



The Corporation of the Township of Norwich
Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday February 27, 2025
Council Meeting – Operating Budget

In Attendance:

Council:

Mayor Jim Palmer
Councillor Toews
Councillor DePlancke
Councillor Gear
Councillor Couwenberg

Staff:

James Johnson, Acting CAO/Treasurer
Kimberley Armstrong, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
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
Dirk Kramer, Acting Chief Building Official/Drainage Superintendent
Sean McCoy, Deputy Clerk/Planning Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The regular session 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 2024 Draft Operating Budget Introduction

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the process and explained the overall budget impacts includes the Capital and Community Grants portions which have been previously approved. He further explained that the 2024 actuals presented in the budget are unaudited as the 2024 year-end is not yet completed.

5. Reports

5.1 Required Disclosure Re: Budget Implications

Report FS 2024-02

Resolution #2

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That Report FS 2025-02, Required Disclosure Re: Budget Impacts, be received as information;

And further that the information be approved as presented.

Carried

6 Operating Budget

6.1 2024 Draft Operating Budget Package

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the process, including overall local levy impact, budget drivers, historical levies and required disclosures.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Johnson explained that approximately \$250,000 of the increase in reserve contributions went into the bridge reserve to cover projects projected in the 10-year capital forecast.

Councillor DePlancke exited the meeting at approximately 9:13 a.m.
Councillor DePlancke returned at approximately 9:15 a.m.

Mr. Johnson explained that the net impact of the Township levy would be an increase of 2.89%. This reflects the 5-year history of levy increases, adjusted for growth, have been under 3% for years, with the exception of the 2024 budget which was due to an increase in services for gravel road conversion.

6.2 General Government

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the Council budget, which includes legal fees and the Community Grants program. Mr. Johnson provided an overview of general expenses for the corporate services and finance departments, insurance, IT, photocopying, shared staffing positions, health and safety, and bank interest revenues.

6.3 Protective Services

Chief Van Patee provided an overview of operating expenses, including: equipment, supplies, peer support application for mental health, shared services staff, fire training expenses, DZ licence training and GovDeals revenues. He also advised that additional

revenues were realized from user fees, inspection, enforcement activities and sale of equipment.

Mr. Johnson referenced the new Joint Police Service Board and advised that the Provincial policing credit has been set aside to offset increases anticipated for 2026. Mr. Johnson also provided an overview of the Building Services budget.

6.4 Transportation

Mr. Farkas provided an overview of expenses, including; road patrol, road and roadside maintenance, vehicle upkeep, winter control, sign replacement, and streetlights. There were Council questions and discussion regarding: brushing and ditching, hardtop maintenance, equipment rental costs, speed signs, and efficiencies realized by having Public Works operating out of a single building.

In response to Council questions, Mr. Farkas explained that brushing is cutting trees and limbs and that ditching is reshaping the actual bottom of the ditch.

Mr. Johnson advised that if Council would like to see increases for service levels, that a notice of motion may be brought forward for specific direction to staff to provide a report.

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the drainage budget, explaining that the difference between the budgeted amounts and the actuals are covered by the drain reserve.

There were Council questions and discussion regarding: annual billings write offs, drainage construction levels since COVID, and the amount of municipal drains located within the Township.

Council recessed at 10:29 a.m.
Council resumed at 10:40 a.m.

6.5 Health Services

Mr. Wells provided an overview of the operating budget. He advised that a new physician had been brought in which resulted in an increase in revenues and expenses for that practice. There was Council questions and discussion regarding: number of staff employed at the medical centre and the reduction in costs covered by tax payers over the years the medical centre has been in operation.

6.6 Recreation and Culture

Mr. Schaafsma provided an overview of operations, including: municipal cemeteries, recreational facilities, arena, parks, halls, libraries and the pool. He advised that there were no new levels of service, however there was an increase in staffing reflecting the two approved seasonal staff in the proposed in the budget. He also advised that some rental numbers are different than anticipated due to club amalgamations.

There were Council questions and discussion regarding: cemetery fees and maintenance, grass cutting contracts, changes in community centre rentals, and the Pioneer Rooms.

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of expenses for Planning Services, economic development, the Municipal Heritage committee, and the Canada Day Committee.

Mr. Johnson explained the overall estimated taxpayer impacts and the overall levy including the municipal, county, and education amounts. There was Council discussion with respect to the impacts of the County budget on the levy.

Council members expressed their gratitude to staff for all their hard work preparing a responsible budget.

Resolution #3

Moved by Karl Toews, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That the 2025 Township of Norwich Operating Budget be adopted as presented.

Carried

7. By-Laws
No. 15-2024 To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council

7.1 First and Second Reading of the Following By-law

Resolution #4

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

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

No. 11-2025 To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council.

Carried

7.2 Third Reading of the Following By-law

Resolution #5

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That By-law 11-2025 be taken as read a third and final time and passed and signed by the Mayor and Clerk and the Corporate Seal be affixed thereto.

Carried

8. Adjournment – 11:25 a.m.

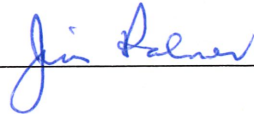
Resolution #6

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

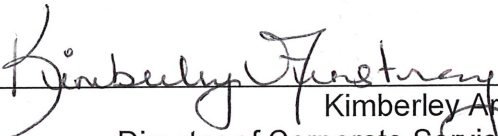
That this Council do now adjourn.

Carried

These minutes adopted by way of Resolution No. 2 as approved by Council at its meeting on the 25th day of March, 2025.



Jim Palmer
Mayor



Kimberley Armstrong
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk