

## **2020 Public Budget Meeting February 11, 2020 – Comments and Response to Questions**

- **Mary Olsen** – **Question:** Thank you um I would like to ask how you have examined the services that you give for tax payers like the admin, fire service, garbage, works that whatever. How have you examined the efficiencies in terms of cost changes to the services that you already are giving at a cost. Have you looked at efficiencies to try to get that cost lowered rather than at efficiencies where you can buy something so that in the future it gets more efficient but meanwhile the cost to taxpayers perhaps is gone up so efficiencies of whatever. And I gather I'm not going to get an answer so could I leave the question for you?  
Do you understand what I mean by the question? Just efficiencies within Uh. When was the last time for instance that you looked at the total cost of any one of those services maybe or services you give and tried to find efficiencies there to lower the actual cost and get the same service hopefully because I don't remember that having been done for years.
- **RESPONSE:** A review of this type has not been done. Council has applied to the province for a grant to do a full-service delivery study. This would encompass all departments.
- **Margret McLeod** – **Question:** Thank You, in this executive summary page, the page 2 of the report, it shows revenue 2019 to be \$598 thousand less than the 2019 budgeted amount. It also shows expenses 2019 to be 1.6 million less than the 2019 budgeted amount and yet the 2020 budgeted amount is greater by 2 million than was spent in 2019 year to date of 2019. So, the question is, please explain where the 2019, 1.6 million dollars is gone and why there are no reserves if the 2020 budgeted amount is 2 million in excess of 2019 spending? And I can give it to you in writing.
- **RESPONSE:** Please see the details of the February 4 Admin year to date update for estimates and the 2019 surplus and the reasons given for it. Greater spending in 2020 is the reason why there is insufficient funds for reserve contributions. Creation of reserves would require even further spending.
- **Margret McLeod** – **Question:** Thanks, the second question is, did Council at any time during the budget process from December to February when you are having your meetings receive a listing of the actual expenditure by staff from the actual accounting software used by staff in the office? That is the budget to actual amounts I hadn't seen at that, at a public meeting since March I think, I think it was out in March, this would be prior to the treasurer correcting or moving or consolidating the amounts into different spreadsheets and presenting the budget to Council. So, the question is, did you receive a listing of year to dates budget to actual amounts before you started your budget?
- **RESPONSE:** No, accounting software printouts are usually not provided to council. They are available upon request at the Township office along with any other records the council should wish to review. Such a printout runs 36 pages in length and the consolidated versions are considered by staff to convey more meaningful and understandable information.

- **Paul Hamilton - Comments:** Quite an interesting discussion today um when I first looked at this budget I was quite impressed to see the rate reduced for last year a minus 1.7% because, I've, on the properties that I own and I have owned several properties across Canada over the years that I've been alive and I've got one in B.C. still and out here I always look at the rate that the Municipality is charging. So when the tax season came up and they sent all the papers out I compared the rate, not the MPAC assessed value for my property because at the end of the day I benefit from that because if I sell it I get the increased value so whatever it goes up it goes up I'm OK with that piece. It was the rate that I looked at when I saw the rates went down 1.71, I was quite shocked. I hadn't seen that; I don't think I can recall ever a rate going down where I lived maybe I lived in the wrong places I don't think so. Now we're talking about levies, I get the dollar piece you know nobody likes to pay more money and that's, we each have to pay at the end of the day but when you figure right down to the actual amount of money we're talking and hearing amounts of 30 dollars and 60 dollars a year really at the end of the day if your going to go to dinner with your spouse your going to spend well beyond that for one dinner it's not a big deal talking about the 5%. So when I look at this, I first thought it was great then I began to realize that maybe there is a flaw in the budget and that your reducing the rate and your not contributing to reserves or your taking more out of the reserves than you could otherwise. So for me and with all the experience that I have had in all of my little world you know that number should have been a plus 3 and when I look at that number and I see the reserve being drawn less because you have to save money, because the big thing will come and it will happen, is that you need to have that money in the bank so you have to save money. So I guess my comment is to each of you, you got to find a way to get that number back up so it makes sense to everybody and ya I'm not in favor of paying more taxes but I recognize that as a tax payer we get services and we pay for those services in our taxes. So as long as the services are there and not reduced, I'm OK with paying for them. Costs go up 3% a year 2.5 – 3% a year so really at the end of the day the services I pay to this township and at the County I should accept 2-3% increase in my tax costs because that's what it is. I get that in my salary as does pretty well everybody, that's my comments no questions.