

2020 Public Budget Meeting February 11, 2020 – Response to Comments

- Mary Olsen – **Question:** Have you examined services (admin, fire, works) to obtain actual “cost decreasing” efficiencies in service delivery. This differs from obtaining efficiencies by spending more on purchases of new technologies and equipment. **Response:** A review of this type has not been done. It would be difficult to find any efficiencies with no upfront costs. For instance, in order to properly review the fire department we should bring in a person who is familiar with fire departments and has a great deal of experience. This would involve paying an outside contractor (most likely a retired fire chief) which would have upfront costs. This type of activity could be undertaken at the direction of council.
- Margret McLeod – **Question:** The executive summary of the budget shows revenue to be \$598,000 less than the 2019 budgeted amount. It also shows expenses in 2019 to be \$1,600,000 less than the budgeted amount. And yet the 2020 budgeted amount is greater by \$2,072,818 than was spent in 2019 year to date. Please explain why there are no reserves if the 2020 budgeted amount is \$2,072,818 in excess of 2019 spending. **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:** Did council at any time during the budget process from December to February receive a listing from the actual accounting software used by staff in the office. Ei. Budget to actual amounts. This would be prior to the treasurer correcting or moving and consolidating amounts in different spreadsheets. **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.
- Margret McLeod – **Question:** It was stated at the March 12, 2019 budget meeting (for 2019) of council that carry over projects from 2018 would add \$1.2 million to the budget for 2019. The CAO/OM requested direction to spend that in 2019. Road construction was talked about, and council allowed only \$900,000 to be taken of revenues to be used in 2019. Only \$341,000 was spent on roads (capital projects) in 2019. Where has the rest of the \$900,000 disappeared to? Ei. \$559,000? **Response:** Please refer to the February 4 2020 admin year to date update for details on the current surplus projections and year to date spending. Per that report the Township is currently on track for a surplus of approximately \$850,000 which, once confirmed by the 2019 audit, will be available to council to be allocated back into reserves as part of a 2019 surplus contribution.
- Margret McLeod – **Question:** The agenda title or heading labels this a budget meeting. The notice on the Township website refers to this as a Public Presentation – Budget Agenda. The proceedings of council bylaw describes the requirements for public notice, regular meetings, special meetings, and public meetings. Is it a public meeting or is it a budget meeting? Which item of the proceedings bylaw does this meeting fall under? Inconsistencies add confusion and bewilderment for the reader of the townships website or records. **Response:** This was a public meeting about the budget.