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Whitewater Region Council Summary

2024 Water and Wastewater Budgets Council Decisions.

Full agendas can be viewed at www.whitewaterregion.ca/council/meetings/

Video is available on our YouTube page.

This summary does not constitute the official record of the meetings and approved Minutes should be consulted for that purpose.

2024 Water and Wastewater Budgets

- Staff presented budgets with an 8.5% user fee increase for water expenditure and a 12.55% user increase for wastewater expenditure.
 - The driving factors for these user fee increases were general inflation of fixed operating costs, contract and utility increases, and debenture payments for project completion.

2024 Water Budget

- Operating expenditures increased by \$231,180 since 2023, with a large portion of the increase resulting from a new debenture, capital, and contract costs.
- The transfer to reserve for future projects was decreased by \$132,780 from 2023 for a total of \$209,820 (2024). These funds will support future improvements.

2024 Wastewater Budget:

- Operating expenditures increased by \$131,300 over 2023, with a large portion of the increase resulting from electricity, natural gas and, contract costs for the new wastewater facility.
- The transfer to reserve for future projects was increased by \$12,400 (2024) from the \$0 of 2023.

Council and staff remain dedicated to addressing resident's concerns over user fees:

On October 18, 2023, Council approved a motion to advocate to the federal and provincial government and direct staff to examine efficiencies. The resolution reads as follows:

1. Issuance of letters to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) outlining the affordability challenges relating to Whitewater Region's water and wastewater rates.

2. Request a joint meeting with Cheryl Gallant, MP - Renfrew - Nipissing - Pembroke, John Yakabuski, MPP – Renfrew - Nipissing - Pembroke, and County of Renfrew Warden Peter Emon outlining the affordability challenges relating to Whitewater Region's water and wastewater rates.
 - a. Issue a request via Cheryl Gallant to request a delegation of the Minister of Infrastructure Canada; and
 - b. Issue a request via MPP John Yakabuski for a joint or individual delegations with the Hon. Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, and Hon. Andrea Khanjin, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks.
3. Direct staff to provide a report on options relating to efficiencies and/or revenue generation (i.e., water meters, septage treatment, funding model, OCWA Optimization, etc.)

On December 6, 2023, Council approved a motion to address the affordability of water and wastewater systems. The resolution reads as follows:

1. Advocate to the County of Renfrew:
 - a. to make County Council aware that rural and small urban water and wastewater systems are financially unsustainable and seek a resolution to support advocacy for additional financial supports from the provincial and federal levels of government; and
 - b. to seek support from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to examine if the unaffordability of water and wastewater system operational costs is systemic provincially and nationally.
2. Establish "Water and Wastewater Task Force," that would report to Council with advice and policy recommendations relating to operating and life-cycle costs of water and wastewater systems, including a review of existing programs, policies, and solutions both locally and in other relevant jurisdictions.
3. That this resolution be circulated to the Honorable Cheryl Gallant MP, John Yakabuski MPP, AMO, ROMA, FCM, all municipalities within the County of Renfrew, County of Renfrew Warden, and the City of Pembroke.

Finance & Administration Kurtis McGonegal, Treasurer
kmcgonegal@whitewaterregion.ca
613-646-2282, x138

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Ivan Burton, CAO
613-646-2282, x124
iburton@whitewaterregion.ca

Neil Nicholson, Mayor
613-646-2282, x173
nnicholson@whitewaterregion.ca