

MINUTES
Special/Budget Meeting
June 29, 2022
7:00 p.m.

Present: Absent:
Reeve: Rodney Wood
Councillors: Mike Garside
Pat Garside Dianne Holt
Dave Leask
Road Superintendent: Lyn Garside
Clerk Treasurer: Valerie Obarymskyj

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

This Special Meeting was called to address the 2022 Draft Budget. In the interest of expediting a zoning matter for a resident, a separate Public Meeting to address that issue had been scheduled for the same date.

2022-74

Moved by Pat Garside

Seconded by Dave Leask

Resolved that we do accept the Agenda as presented. *Carried*

Council reviewed the Fire Department budget for 2022. The Clerk advised the Fire Budget had been shared with the Council of the Village of Hilton Beach, however, the Fire Board has not met separately to review it. The budget includes levies that have increased by \$3,000 each for both the Village and the Township. The budget maintained the same \$10,000 contribution to Equipment Reserve Funds as last year. It was noted by the Fire Chief that the additional modifications planned for the tanker will be done in-house and is more a matter of available time than money. Given some confusion over the increased levy, approval of the budget was deferred till later in the meeting and Council moved forward with other agenda items.

Council reviewed the budget from the St. Joseph Island Museum, as well as, a copy of its May 2022 Board Minutes detailing plans for this season now that Covid restrictions have been lifted.

2022-75

Moved by Mike Garside

Seconded by Pat Garside

Resolved that we do approve the St. Joseph Island Museum Budget for 2022 as presented in the amount of \$41,025 with Hilton Township's share being \$6,070 (21.20%). *Carried*

At 7:30 pm Reeve Wood opened the Public Meeting under the Planning Act to review the zoning amendment to permit a reduced setback for a septic system on a Hamilton Drive lot. This matter had been discussed by Council prior to the formal zoning application and in response to some of Council's concerns, the owners, as well as, Gary Leith, Inspector with Algoma Public Health (APH), were present to answer questions. Mr. Leith confirmed that the Ontario Building Code (OBC) requires a 15 metre (50') setback from watercourses but acknowledged several municipalities maintain their own setback requirements which may be greater than the OBC and APH will respect those when issuing its own permits. It was noted that only two of the four Island municipalities require a 30 metre (100') setback from the high-water mark (St. Joseph Township and Hilton Township) primarily because the remaining two municipalities never adopted the 2011 Zoning By-law. Mr. Leith noted that consistency on the Island would be beneficial for all parties involved. Mr. Leith advised that for this particular property, the alternate roadside location was not practical because of a high water table and required removal of a substantial number of trees, as well as, the location of the neighbours' wells would be a concern. Mr. Leith confirmed that when approving a septic location, APH's primary interest is the same as Council's and that a suitable septic system be installed in a location and manner that will not result in any environmental concern. Details were then provided as to how this installation would address the topography concerns. Reeve Wood thanked Mr. Leith for his attendance and comments. The Clerk confirmed the St. Joseph Island Planning Board had reviewed the zoning amendment and approved it subject to adhering to APH requirements. None of the other agencies or individuals given notice of the amendment had submitted any objections. The matter was once again discussed by Council and while there was consensus to permit the reduced setback for this lot, Council noted any future requests would still need to be evaluated based on the circumstances associated with that specific property. Reeve Wood closed the Public Meeting under the Planning Act and returned to Open Meeting under the Municipal Act.

2022-76

Moved by Dave Leask

Seconded by Mike Garside

Resolved that we do give first, second and third and final reading and pass By-Law No. 1333-22 being a by-law to reduce the minimum setback on Lot 27, Plan H597, 3578 Hamilton Drive, Township of Hilton. *Carried*

Council returned to its review of the Fire Board budget for 2022 and the issue of the need for the increased levy was resolved and the following resolution passed.

2022-77

Moved by Mike Garside

Seconded by Pat Garside

Resolved that we do approve the Hilton Union Fire Board Budget for 2022 in the amount of \$47,320 which includes municipal levies from the Township of Hilton and the Village of Hilton Beach in the amount of \$23,080 each. *Carried*

Council reviewed the Clerk's Report on the Draft Budget for 2022. This year there is a need to increase the municipal tax levy by a significant \$100,330 in comparison to the last two years when the levy remained the same. The reasons behind the increase are linked to how fuel prices impact so many aspects of the road department coupled with the substantial increase to planned road projects for this year. The Township plans for annual road improvements in the \$75k to \$100k range each year but this year we will be completing almost \$400k in upgrades. A significant part of that will be covered by the NORDS funding (\$125k); OCIF (\$100k) and Federal Gas Tax (\$50k) still leaving an increase of approximately \$25k to be funded by taxation. New tires were required for both the grader and the pickup this year costing \$10k. The increase in roads projects will also result in a significant increase to fuel cost which has been estimated \$11k higher. Certain Administration projects have added to the increased levy and they include the Asset Management Plan (\$45k) and the Digitization of Records/Technology Upgrade Project (\$157k). Both Administration projects are largely funded under different grants but will still require a municipal contribution of approximately \$35,000 combined. Our costs for the landfill have increased \$5k, however, it was noted that annual costs are expected to increase in the range of \$25k to \$30k in the coming years due to Ministry of Environment requirements. Ideally, contributions to a new landfill reserve fund would have been started this year but due to the already increased levy, the Clerk recommended waiting till 2023. The high inflation over the past year resulted in a COLA increase of \$6,000 to total wages for all employees.

The Province of Ontario has continued its freeze on any reassessment until 2024. Due to Covid, MPAC inspectors were not visiting properties to pick up building improvement values and as a result, our assessment has only changed slightly. As a result of the negligible change in assessments and the proposed combined municipal/education tax rate of 0.009885, for every \$100,00 in assessment, property owners will be paying approximately \$109 more than they did in 2021. The Clerk advised that because the Township has consistently lowered its tax rate when previous assessment levels have increased, even the new tax rate for 2022 remains the lowest of all Algoma area municipalities.

The Roads Department ended its 2021 year of operations with an approximate \$10,000 surplus. The Clerk transferred it to the Roads Working Capital Reserve which had been significantly depleted with a \$40,000 transfer in 2022 towards the purchase of the new backhoe. The balance of the backhoe (\$97,000) had been covered by the remaining Modernization Funding received in 2019. The Roads Working Capital is now at \$16,750 and the intent should be to increase that level with any year-end surpluses in the coming years.

The Fire Department ended its 2021 year of operations with a deficit of approximately \$5,000. This resulted from significantly higher charges for the pumper and tanker certifications. Rather than transferring from the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund, the excess charges were covered with a transfer from the Fire Working Capital Reserve.

The Clerk advised there will be a balance of approximately \$31k remaining from the Covid Funding received in 2020 and 2021. The next reporting date is July 29, 2022. Some of the funds have been included in the 2022 budget to cover donations to local service clubs that have helped residents in various ways during the period of restrictions; expenses associated with improving virtual meetings and overtime costs linked to the five-day availability of the Clerk from January to May 2022. Covid funding is not to be used for capital expenses. Any money not spent is to be transferred to a Reserve in case there is a future Covid-related need.

Council did review two new requests for financial support. Council decided it could not further increase the municipal levy despite the merit of the two requests. Council noted when residents completed last year's Community Safety and Well-Being survey the results clearly showed continued support for the local hospital and health programs in general on the Island. Council will continue to support Physician Recruitment with an annual contribution of \$1,000 and Matthews Memorial Hospital with a \$1,500 contribution.

Formal adoption of this year's budget and corresponding tax rates are scheduled for the July 13, 2022 meeting of Council.

2022-78

Moved by Dave Leask

Seconded by Mike Garside

Resolved that we do approve the 2022 Budget as presented in the amount of \$1,513,130 including a municipal tax levy of \$723,330 (including Payment in Lieu of Taxes). *Carried*

2022-79

Moved by Pat Garside

Seconded by Mike Garside

Resolved that we do pass By-Law No. 1334-22 being a by-law to confirm the proceedings of this meeting.

Carried

2022-80

Moved by Pat Garside

Seconded by Dave Leask

Resolved that we do adjourn at 10:10 p.m., Council to meet again at the Hilton Township Municipal Office at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 13, 2022 for the next regular meeting of Council. *Carried*

Reeve, Rodney Wood

Clerk, Valerie Obarymskyj