



## Port Hope Council Authorizes 2015 Budget

April 21, 2015

**PORT HOPE, ON** – Port Hope Council has adopted the 2015 Municipal operating and capital budgets (including Police and Library), reflecting a total tax levy requirement of \$16,333,268 and a 1.5% increase after growth.

Municipal assessment growth, primarily from residential development, resulted in a 3.8% increase in the total weighted assessment of the Municipality. Through the budget review process, reductions were implemented to reach a 0% increase after growth. A contingency fund was then established to meet any needs that may arise over the year, with any remaining funds going to Capital Reserves.

In accordance with the approach implemented by Council, 80% of the earned interest in each Ward's LLRW fund will be applied directly to reduce the 2015 Municipal levy, and 20% will remain in the fund to generate incremental interest to offset the increasing cost of living. After the application of the LLRW interest, the total impact on the *Municipal portion* of the average residential tax bill (\$256,000 assessment) is a \$30 reduction for Ward 1 (for a total Municipal portion of \$2,327) and a \$35 reduction for Ward 2 (for a total Municipal portion of \$1,131).

Mayor Bob Sanderson stated, "Council had a clear mandate to bring a zero-budget increase after growth, and we worked hard to achieve that goal. We did recognize however, that it would not allow contributions to reserve funds or investment in the community. The final budget allows us to contribute to our reserves and investment in the future, all within a 1.5% tax increase. With the application of LLRW interest funds the result is a significant decrease for all Port Hope taxpayers and that is great news for our community."

Additions to this year's Budget include maintaining the Bylaw Enforcement Officer and Heritage Planner positions; providing interim Finance Department assistance; and administering Emerald Ash Borer treatments. Budget reductions have been achieved through eliminating paper ballot voting for the 2018 election; reducing the Roads Operator compliment by two (which also eliminates the need to replace a plow truck); placing a hold on re-hiring the Development Technician position in 2015; discontinuing the spring and fall leaf/yard waste pickup program (as the County is now providing this service); and reducing the annual Works and Engineering programs by \$190,057 (excluding roads resurfacing and sidewalk repair).

Councillor Les Andrews, Chair of General Government & Finance stated, "Council is pleased with the budget and the positive steps we are making toward our Strategic Financial Plan. There are no new debenture requirements, we have limited the use of Equipment and Building Reserves to capital projects that will bring operational savings and be repaid in a few years, and any remaining contingency will go to Capital Reserves. We are meeting our operating and capital requirements while addressing several non-service level financial challenges."

Community Grants will benefit 10 community organizations with grants totaling \$138,647. Key capital projects include Alexander Street water and sewer rehabilitation; sanitary sewer twinning; pumper/rescue truck down payment; Ward Street improvements; off-leash dog park fencing; and rehabilitation of Challice Line (a joint project with Township of Cavan Monaghan).

Council also approved the levy rate by-law for 2015. For a total property tax bill (Municipal, County and Education taxes combined) an average (\$256,000 assessment) residential property will see a \$45 reduction in Ward 1 (for a total property tax bill of \$4,034) and a \$50 reduction for Ward 2 (for a total property tax bill of \$2,838).

Final tax bills will be issued in June 2015 based on the approved tax rates. Tax installment due dates are June 30, 2015 and September 30, 2015.

The Municipal budget process begins each fall with a Management Team review of preliminary budget numbers for preparation of a proposed budget. The Budget Committee then reviews the proposed budget including any requests for clarification, revisions, and amendments to the budget based on the information provided. The Committee then recommends final review and approval by Council. All meetings of the Budget Committee are open to the public, advertised on the website and local papers. Agendas are posted on the Municipal website and the community is encouraged to participate in the budget process.

Detailed information on the approved Municipal Budget is available at [www.porthope.ca](http://www.porthope.ca).

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