

Faraday council discusses its 2022 draft budget

By Mike Riley Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At their meeting on April 6, Faraday Township council received their 2022 draft budget from Dawn Switzer, the clerk and treasurer. After a brief discussion and gratitude from council to Switzer and staff for a job well done, it was revealed that the township will see a 1.98 per cent increase in the tax levy this year. Switzer presented the 2022 draft budget to council at their April 6 meeting. Overall, council thought the budget was reasonable and didn't see anything wrong with it, congratulating Switzer and staff on their efforts and a job well done. Overall, budgeted expenditures for 2022 were \$6,403,231, which is \$1,774,808.20 more than the actual 2021 amount of \$3,874,121.80, due to township insurance, environmental services waste management board expenses, COVID-19 expenses, policing requisition, gravel resurfacing, road construction on Monck Road and leachate (a liquid generated from rainfall and the natural decomposition of waste) management contract capital. There were also expenditures laid out for the township's backhoe, truck no. 3 and grader no. 1, which Switzer explains are line items that are estimated at the beginning of the year. They include all expenditures including fuel/gas, regular maintenance, repairs and insurance. Unfortunately, we can only estimate due to the constant change in fuel/gas prices, insurance and unexpected repairs, she says. Revenues for 2022 were budgeted at \$3,640,047, which is \$1,654,955.70 more than the actual total in 2021 of \$1,322,458.30, due to more provincial grants and rebates, the Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste program, building permits, sale of land, surplus equipment sales and others. For more information, and to look at the 2022 draft budget, it can be requested by contacting Switzer at d.switzer@faraday.ca. Councillor Murray Bowers thought that looking at what they were planning to do and what they're accomplishing, it was a good budget. All these things are necessary and we happen to be able to do them, which is a good thing. There are lots of people around who are cutting the budget and going back on things. We seem to be moving ahead. So, thank you Scott and Dawn for running the ship the way it is. Well done, he says. Switzer's report on the 2022 draft budget took a look at the capital projects that needed to be completed, which included; the council chambers update (new desks, paint and flooring using COVID-19 funding from the province), implementing all the recommended renovations to the fire halls as set out in the Fire Energy Audit and Feasibility Study and the purchase of a fire department pumper/tanker (which she notes was previously accounted for in the 2021 budget, so they're using \$200,000 from the fire reserve). There are also several Roads projects to be done in 2022 that include; Lower Faraday Road (a portion of the \$100,000 expense covered by the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund), Monck Road at a cost of \$170,000 (a portion of which will be covered by the Monck Road reserve), Old Hastings Road Bridge (a project previously accounted for in last year's budget so they're using \$170,000 from the capital reserve), the sand salt storage shed (a project previously accounted for in the 2020 and 2021 budget, so they're using \$350,000 from the capital reserve), Trout Lake Road, Airport Road, the purchase of ¾ tonne pickup trucks, one of which was previously accounted for in the 2021 budget so they're using \$80,000 from the capital reserve, and the other is due to the age of the vehicle, which is a 2016 Dodge, and the expenses that continue for repairs. To keep the levy at a responsible increase, we have designated using \$70,000 from the capital reserve [for the 2016 Dodge pickup], she said in her report. A waste feasibility study and permanent fencing are required at the landfill, along the treeline, to preclude wind-blown garbage from entering the forest. With regard to insurance for the township, Switzer says that in conversation with other townships, some of them last year had seen a 50 per cent increase or more. In 2021, Faraday saw an 18 per cent increase, and she says she's hoping that the increase this year is no more than the projected 20 per cent. While the township had gotten a number of donation requests, Switzer said that she had not allotted any money for those requests. Overall, Switzer said that staff continue to add to the township reserves for a total of \$460,000. The township portion of the levy will be a 1.98 per cent increase. At this time, we don't have the County levy. As per the province, there will be no change in the school board levies for 2022, she says. After completing the proposed budget, I have calculated that the township has \$7,679,445.05 in reserves. When working on the draft budget, council and staff take into perspective ways to continue to be effective and efficient in providing services and operations without a large increase to our ratepayers.