



**Mike Mayes, Director
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June 17, 2015

**JOINT CORPORATE SERVICES, OFFICE OF THE CAO, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS,
FINANCIAL SERVICES REPORT – 2015-38**

TO: Mayor Tony Van Bynen and Members of Council
Committee of the Whole

SUBJECT: 2016 Budget Schedule and Community Engagement

ORIGIN: Director, Financial Services and Senior Communications Specialist'

RECOMMENDATION

That Joint Corporate Services, Office of the CAO, Corporate Communications, Financial Services Report 2015-38 dated June 17, 2015, regarding the 2016 Budget Schedule and Community Engagement be received and the following recommendation be adopted:

1. **THAT the attached schedule be approved for the 2016 budget process.**

COMMENTS

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to finalize the schedule for the 2016 budget and provide an overview of the budget consultation and public engagement strategy.

Summary

As reported in the most recent Community Survey, 95 per cent of residents are satisfied with Newmarket as a place to live and four out of five residents are satisfied with the services provided by the Town. The 2016 budget will aim to maintain current service levels while also addressing major budget drivers and planning for future growth.

The goal is to adopt two budgets this year: the 2015 budget was postponed due to the 2014 municipal election and the development of the new Council's 2014-2018 Strategic Priorities. This report recommends that the 2016 budget process commences in June, with final approval scheduled for December. Extensive public consultation and community engagement will take place in August and September. Based on the proposed schedule, the preliminary draft budget will be presented at Committee of the Whole on October 19, 2015.

Background

The Town of Newmarket continually strives to improve its budget process and implement innovative communication tactics to engage residents and garner feedback on the quality and level of services. Newmarket has been recognized for best practices in budget communications by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), Municipal Finance Officers' Association (MFOA) and the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO). A number of other municipalities have adopted Newmarket's approach to budget communications.

As one of Council's 2014-2018 Strategic Priority themes, Community Engagement is a critical component in the development of the Town's budget and planning for the future. The community survey results and the budget engagement results helped to inform the 2015 budget process.

In 2015, the Town engaged hundreds of residents via the interactive on-line budget tool. The tool asked residents "how would you like to see your tax dollars invested?" and provided the opportunity to maintain, increase, or decrease service levels in eight areas of service delivery. The community engagement plan included a callout to 15,000 residents encouraging and promoting participation in the online budget tool.

A variety of traditional communications tools and tactics including radio ads, Town Page, website and media releases were also utilized.

2016 Budget Process

Staff are currently working on their budget requests for 2016. The newly formed Budget Coordination Committee has reviewed and renewed the process to make it more effective and efficient.

10-year Capital Budget

There have been recommendations to move to multi-year budgeting for our capital program, the most recent being the Capital Financing Sustainability Strategy developed with Hemson Consulting. In 2014, the Town updated its Development Charges (DC's) and developed its first Asset Management Plan (AMP). These two studies cover growth and replacement which is 75-85% of our capital program.

A 10-year capital budget will facilitate longer term cash and reserve forecasts which will allow longer term and higher yielding investments.

The actual format is under development and will be similar to that of York Region.

4-year Operating Outlook

Along with the 2016 operating budget, an outlook for the years 2017 to 2020 will also be presented. This was also recommended by Hemson.

During the 2015 budget deliberations, having a projection for the following year proved to be useful in making decisions that impacted multiple years.

It is anticipated that budgets will see more of a requirement for phasing, deferring and enhanced planning. As such, developing forecasts based on what we know, at a high level and based on drivers, is a prudent choice.

Currently the water and wastewater budgets are based on their 6-year financial plans, Central York Fire services has a 10-year rolling operating forecast, and the Newmarket Public Library is introducing a 5-year projection.

Proposed Budget Schedule

ACTIVITY	DATE
Budget process and community engagement presented to Committee of the Whole for approval by Council	June 22
Community Engagement	August - September
Fees & Charges for early approval – Committee of the Whole Public Meeting	August 31
Fees & Charges for early approval – Council approval	September 14
Treasurer meets one-on-one with Members of Council	July to September
Committee of the Whole Presentation – Preliminary draft budget (presentation of Community Engagement results to date)	October 19
Draft budget information available to public and on website	October 26
Committee of the Whole – Public Meeting on the draft budget	November 9
Committee of the Whole – Public Meeting on the draft budget	November 30
Committee of the Whole - Public Meeting (on remaining Fees & Charges)	December 7
Council approval of the Budget and remaining Fees & Charges	December 14

Community Consultation and Engagement

The goal of the Budget Communications Plan is to continue to increase community awareness and engagement in the budget process.

Under the engagement brand ***Get Involved***, the 2016 Budget Communications Plan will continue to utilize a cross-section of traditional and social media tools and technology to engage residents and garner opinions on how Newmarket's taxes should be spent.

- Interactive online budget tool
- Citizen jury focus group
- Public meetings (CoW)
- Town website
- Social media: Twitter, Facebook, e-newsletters
- Media releases/advisories

- Print ads (Snap and Newmarket Era)
- Radio ads (The Jewel)
- Presence at community events

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

This report links to Newmarket's key strategic directions in being Well Managed through fiscal responsibility.

The further refinement of community engagement for the budget links to Council priority Community Engagement and is supported by the Corporate Communications and Financial Services goal of Customer Services Excellence.

The continual improvement of the budget process links to the Council priority Efficiency / Financial Management. This is supported by the Financial Services goals of Sustainable Financial Strategy and Internal Efficiencies.

CONSULTATION

The 2016 budget schedule was prepared by the Budget Coordinating Committee which has cross-corporate representation, in collaboration with the Financial Services department.

The community engagement approach was developed by Corporate Communications in consultation with the Financial Services department and the Budget Coordination Committee.

The Strategic Leadership Team and the Operational Leadership Team have reviewed the schedule, process and communications plan; and have provided feedback.

Next Steps

The Treasurer will undertake one-on-one meetings with each member of Council and provide them with budget tool kits to assist in their review of the budget requests.

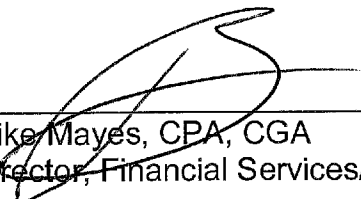
For the 2017 budget, Community engagement will begin in January with the launch of an enhanced, online budget tool.

BUDGET IMPACT

The recommendations from this report will form the basis for the 2016 budget process, but has no direct budget impact.

CONTACT

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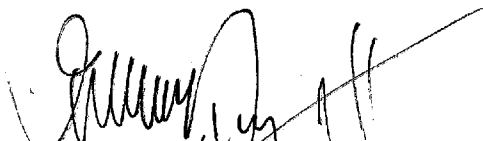
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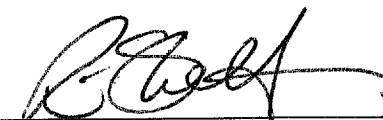
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MM/nh