

Bancroft budget talks continue

Bancroft council has since presented its budget to the public. Some of the proposed numbers have changed, including the tax increase. Please see [here](#) for Bancroft This Week's story reporting the details from the meeting.

By Jake Storey with files from Sarah Sobanski

Bancroft held an important council meeting last week, headed up by Acting Mayor Paul Jenkins. In his opening statements, Jenkins thanked the staff responsible for the relocation of the municipal office. He praised their hard work in making the move a smooth and easy process.

Budget

The 2017 budget was the primary focus of the meeting. Property taxes are expected to rise 2.3 per cent. Council is looking at a total budget more than \$10 million.

“The budget document has been a moving target. We cannot do everything and we needed to make some choices,” said Jenkins. A point was made that nothing is set in stone, as of yet. “We don't expect there to be any changes to the big picture. There may be some tweaks,” said Jenkins.

Environmental services made up the largest portion of the budget at around \$3.5 million. Protective services makes up the second largest portion at more than \$2 million and in third are transportation services at more than \$1.86 million followed closely by general government at \$1.83 million. Parks and recreation and planning and development are significantly less than the other departments – the same as last year's budget. Parks and recreation came in at a proposed \$535,025 while planning and development came in at \$231,774.

Environmental services and protective services saw the most significant drop. Last year the services' 2016 actuals were more than \$1.7 million over the 2016 budgeted amount at around \$2.5 million. This year's budget puts the services at almost \$1 million below last year's actuals, which came in at more than \$4.4 million. According to Jenkins, the town was facing an increase to recycling services between six and 30 per cent and so decided to take that responsibility in-house.

Protective services came in at around \$2 million at the end of 2016. In this year's budget the town has allotted around \$50,000 more. In this are police services which came in at around \$1.2 million last year. They've been budgeted for closer to \$1.1 million this year. That's around \$81,000 below last year's actuals.

General government topped out at more than \$1.8 million. It's up around \$508,000 from last year's final bill. A little more than 80 per cent of that increase will be in general administration. Its total bill in 2016 was close to \$1 million. It's budgeted for around \$1.4 million in 2017.

Transportation services, planning and development, and parks and recreation were budgeted at about the same as last year's actuals. Each saw minor increases, each under \$100,000.

“For the very first time, we've presented a budget that includes every revenue and expenditure,” added CAO Hazel Lambe. “We've made great reductions in our expenditures.”

“You have to spend money to create. We need to attract people,” said Jenkins. “We can't just talk about it, we have to do something. Do you increase your population base to make yourself more attractive to businesses or do you attract business in hopes that it will increase population base? It's a real chicken or the egg situation.”

In addition, Councillor Bill Kilpatrick said he was looking at ways to save money. Attempts were made to acquire Trillium funding for infrastructure. The town applied for grants to continue improving accessibility for seniors but did not receive them.

More MPAC reassessments expected

After the town was hit with more than \$100,000 in charges after a reassessment was made for Canadian Tire, the town wants to prepare for more to come. Parent companies of three local business are currently in the pipe for potential MPAC reassessments that could hit the town. In order to brace for this potential, it has set aside around \$90,000 for the future in the 2017, this including the around \$60,000 that was put aside in last year's budget.