

Highlands East council takes first look at 2017 costs

By Angelica Ingram

At a meeting of council on Nov. 28, Highlands East councillors got a first look at estimates for each department for the next five years.

A five-year capital forecast was presented, with a breakdown of each department.

According to minutes from the meeting, "the proposed five-year capital forecast sets out capital projects and an equipment replacement schedule that identifies needs and associated costs and will require council approval through the budget process."

The draft document includes summaries for year 2016 through to 2021.

Chief administrative officer and treasurer Shannon Hunter said the forecast is merely a draft and is intended to give council a plan for the coming years.

For 2017 administration will cost approximately \$187,000, with a slight increase in 2018 to \$195,000. The roads department presents the most significant cost to the township, with a projected cost of more than \$700,000 for the next two years.

The estimates include vehicle replacements, work on bridges and roads, such as Glamor Lake Road and Contau Road.

Costs for the property department are \$150,500 for 2017 and then drop significantly for the following four years.

Some of the biggest costs for the department in 2017 are the tennis courts in Wilberforce, the Keith Tallman Memorial Arena and upgrades to the Lloyd Watson Memorial Centre.

The total capital forecast for 2017 is \$1.5 million, with 2018 coming in at a similar projection.

The draft does not take into account revenue generated by each department, which could offset costs, said Hunter.

"This is basically the worst case scenario for capital that we foresee," she said. "We take from this and put it into the budget and then go through budget deliberations."

Hunter said council was pleased with the document.

"They like the idea of having a plan," she said.