

Council offers initial thoughts on proposed 2024 budget

Budget presentations began on January 17

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Just after press time on Wednesday, Town of Caledon staff began presentations on the Town's proposed 2024 budget for Caledon Council.

The Town's proposed 2024 budget was released on January 8 and proposes a 3.5 per cent property tax increase for residents.

Ahead of budget discussions, the Citizen asked councillors what their first impressions of the budget were.

Regional Councillor, Wards 4, 5, and 6 Mario Russo said creating a municipal budget is often a challenging and difficult exercise. He said the Region of Peel struggled to bring forward a responsible but fair 2024 budget and he sees the same challenges ahead for Caledon.

'Top of mind will be our residents and our businesses'. are we being fair to them?' said Russo.

He said while being fair to residents, the Town still needs to prepare itself for the future by investing in key areas like staffing, infrastructure, and operations.

Russo said Caledon needs to be able to serve its residents and businesses with the best value for their tax dollar.

'The tax dollars collected need to be respected,' said Russo, adding Caledon needs to efficiently deliver services Caledon residents need and want.

Items that are top of mind for Russo include roads, transit, job opportunities, water and sewer services, schools and trails.

'Our goal will be to deliver the above in a lean and responsible manner, recognizing the inflationary pressures we all live with currently,' said Russo. 'My analysis will focus on, 'are we preparing appropriately for the future?' My key mantras are 'value for dollar' and 'running our municipality like a household' focusing on needs and being responsible with our wants.'

Ward 6 Councillor Cosimo Napoli said Caledon's budget is all about advancing the goals of Caledon's strategic plan. He said Caledon's goals are sustainable growth, connected communities, improved service, and good governance.

Mayor Annette Groves echoed Napoli's points about the budget aligning with the priorities set out in Caledon's strategic plan.

'With this budget we are committed to our residents and businesses while managing the reality of rising costs municipalities face,' said Groves. 'We encourage residents and businesses to learn about our budget process.'

Groves said residents interested in the budget process should check out the Town's community engagement website, haveyoursaycaledon.ca.

Ward 5 Councillor Tony Rosa said he's been reviewing the budget and is looking forward to discussing it with Council and Town staff before a final vote on it is taken.

?Council will need to work collaboratively to ensure that we approve a fair and reasonable budget that ensures we meet the needs of our residents and business owners,? said Rosa. ?It is important that all villages and hamlets have (their) fair share.?