

Council recommends approval of 2023 Caledon OPP budget]

By Zachary Roman

Caledon Council is in support of the local police force's budget for the upcoming year.

At Council's December 6 General Committee meeting, Caledon OPP Detachment Commander MaryLouise Kearns made a presentation to Council on the Caledon OPP's 2023 budget and 2024-2026 projections.

In her presentation, Kearns said the Caledon OPP are projected to have received 33,118 calls for service by the end of 2022. That's slightly less than the 35,028 calls local police received in 2021, when there was a large jump in calls from the years prior where calls hovered in and around the 24,000 range.

Kearns noted that priorities of the Caledon OPP for 2023 are traffic safety, effective community engagement, and property and violent crime reduction.

In 2022, the approved budget for the Caledon OPP was \$13,155,612, a 2.29 per cent increase over the previous year. For 2023, the Caledon OPP are suggesting that Council approve a \$13,530,663 budget, a 2.85 per cent increase from 2022.

Kearns explained the Caledon OPP are proposing three new capital projects for 2023.

The first is to increase the size of the Caledon OPP parking lot in Caledon East for staff, patrol vehicles and visitors at a cost of about \$835,000. The second is the finalization of a secure facility for OPP seizures and storage, which will see the facility be fitted with solar panels to the tune of about \$176,000. The final capital project is the creation of a master plan to address current and future policing needs as Caledon grows rapidly in the coming years; this plan has a total budget of \$100,000.

According to Kearns' presentation, the OPP's reserve fund has sufficient balance to support the police forces' 2023 capital projects.

A Town of Caledon staff report on the Caledon OPP's proposed budget recommended that Council support the OPP's budget, noting that the 2.85 per cent budget increase requested was less than the 3.7 per cent increase the police force had previously forecasted. In their report, Town Staff explained the increase in the budget mostly comes from an increase in policing costs due to Caledon's population growth and an anticipated increase in union collective agreements.

Ward 4 Councillor Nick deBoer said he was happy with the budget as presented and is looking forward to improving community safety in the coming year.

Caledon Council voted unanimously in favour of approving the 2023 Caledon OPP budget at its December 6 General Committee meeting.

The Caledon OPP budget will head to Region of Peel Council in January 2023 for discussion and final approval, as Caledon OPP costs are recovered from Town of Caledon taxpayers on the Regional portion of Caledon property tax bills.