

Council set to approve 2.03% tax increase next week as Budget talks conclude]

By Brock Weir

Caledon residents can expect to see the municipal portion of their tax bills rise by 2.03 per cent this year as Council prepares to sign off on the 2023 Budget.

Final budget approval is set for the February 28 Council meeting.

The final numbers are a result of a series of meetings which started with a projected budget increase of 3.68 per cent.

In a statement last week, the Town said the goal of last week's General Committee meeting was set with a goal of keeping the tax increase as minimal as possible while maintaining service levels and preparing for growth.

"I am very pleased with the work and results of our 2023 Budget at this point," said Mayor Annette Groves in a statement. "As a Council, we sharpened our pencils and worked with staff to bring the budget down to a 2.03 per cent increase from the Town. This achieves a balance between providing the services our residents and businesses depend on daily and keeping the tax increase as low as possible. I applaud our leadership team for helping us prepare a budget that serves the Town as a whole, helps us prepare for growth and manage the many legislative changes and financial impacts we are experiencing."

Added Myuran Palasandiran, Caledon's Chief Financial Officer: "In this budget we looked at our operational needs, legislative changes, and the longer-term growth needs on the horizon. An increase below two per cent would have had a negative impact on our service levels. We're using our reserves strategically to fund our capital program and lessen the impact on our taxpayers as well as to be ready for the unexpected."

In addition to tapping into reserves, other factors which helped lessen the impact include the removal of a two per cent cost of living salary increase proposed for Mayor and Council, and savings with some recreation projects. On the flipside, a boost has been given to support programs for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities.

"This budget ensures our infrastructure such as stormwater and roads continue to operate smoothly for our residents as we grow," said Carey Herd, CAO for the Town of Caledon. "We're committed to efficiency and finding funding opportunities as we face ongoing challenges from new legislation, inflation and continued growth and the expectations that come with it. I thank our Town Council and senior staff for their support in preparing this budget."

The approval of the municipal budget follows the approval of the Region's on February 2. The Region's budget includes a property tax increase of 2.8 per cent for their portion of the tax bill.