

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RECEIVED REGARDING THE 2020-2024 FINANCIAL PLAN.

Is the 6% utilities increase a proposal or a done deal? Will there be similar utility increases for the remaining 4 years of the proposed 5-year plan?

Yes. Council has voted and approved a 6% increase for 2020 for utilities. Rates for the next 4 years will be proposed to Council based on the needs of the funds to support their individual utilities. Each year through the plan the costs of the Utility services are analysed as to being self funding, meaning that, what we charge for the service needs to cover for the costs of the service, and this how we determine if the fees need to be increased. Every year we review the plan and re-evaluate costs. The 6% this year did not cover all costs and we will likely operate in a deficit for these services, but we felt it may have been an unusual year and tried to keep the increase palatable. Right now, we are training and getting our Sewer Treatment Plant Operator certified, so we are required to provide certified operators to support our system and oversee responsibility for the utilities. Once our Operator is certified some of these additional costs should decrease.

Is the \$160,000.00 staffing increase (18%), for each year or is it divided over the 5 years? Do we have new employees or is this due to the cost of living, raises, etc.?

18% represents budgeting for a full time Corporate Officer (last year we did not have the position filled, but use a temp union clerk to fill in a portion of the jobs responsibility) which was finally filled in October. A Deputy Director of Finance was hired in September to replace our Deputy Treasurer, who was promoted to Director of Finance and Deputy CAO. These positions are in place full time, where as last year the budget did not reflect the full time positions, they do now. We have also budgeted for additional union help, as we saw that the front office was still overloaded, so provided more hours to our Payroll/accounting clerk and have temporarily filled a part time clerical position, with the plan to post and fill this year permanently, so that training and backup for our union payroll clerk is available. We are also currently paying for prior contractual obligations. These changes throughout the organization have been provided to Council in several third-party staffing reports outlining the staffing versus the works being completed, and the additional complexities of the positions.

We, my husband and I, accept the 7% tax increase in 2020, and the need for it, but can you please tell me what are the proposed increases for the following 4 years. Is the goal to reach an 80% increase over the 5 years? Can you please share how the remaining 73% would be divided between 2021, 22, 23 and 24?

Staff and Council will be conducting several in depth reviews over the coming months of financial strategic documents as well as reviewing service levels in attempts to reduce the impact on the taxpayer over the coming years. In discussions with Council they are seeking new taxation revenue sources (residential subdivision) and are anticipating that the development at the Mill site will add additional taxations revenues down the road. The taxation scheme is readdressed annually and Council and Staff will be seeking options.

If the 2019 Gen Municipal Tax rate was 5.2555/\$1000 based on assessed value, then how did you get to 5.5464 for the proposed 2020 7% increase? My first instinct was to multiply 5.2555 by .07 which gives me .3678, and added to 5.2555 gets me 5.6233. What information am I missing?

The 2019 municipal tax rate was \$5.5391 (\$5.2555 was referenced above). Municipal taxes include the library, so last years notice you would add the library amount of .2836 in as well. Years ago, our library Council representative wanted it shown separately so everyone knew what they paid per household for the library service. So, you need to add the library to the municipal rate for last year to get the full impact of the Village tax rate last year. This year the two are combined for ease of understanding. The 7% increase is based on the previous years taxation dollars, not the mill rate. The mill rate doesn't change in relation to the increase in dollars (7%) because it is affected by all the other tax classes; utility, business, light industry, heavy industry, recreation, farm etc. and the assessment changes within those classes.

Why were multiple people hired to do the job one person was doing?

Administratively, there have been several independent reports provided to Mayor and Council stating that staffing was insufficient. This insufficient staffing resulted in projects not being completed, only certain percentages of job requirements being completed, and an inability to keep up with ever increasing municipal requirements (mainly financial and filing). Coupled with this, the Village was unable to fill positions previously occupied (deputy clerk).

For that reason, the Village has filled the vacant position of Deputy Clerk, created one additional position of Deputy Director of Finance, and increased the position of AP/AR clerk to full time. Again, this is in line with reports for almost a decade, coupled with comments from the former administrator and the current administrator that the Village was insufficiently staffed. These recommendations for additional staff have been occurring for several years. Council was made aware of the needs for running the Village and supported these changes.

Other community administrations across the country are differing taxes for a period of time during the current health pandemic, why is Gold River not doing the same?

<https://www.mccarthy.ca/en/insights/blogs/mccarthy-tetrault-tax-perspectives/municipal-tax-measures-canada-aimed-covid-19-relief>

The Village of Gold River, like all other municipalities, are reviewing daily changes to Provincial responses to this period. We are following all of the Provincial requirements to taxation and implementing any changes directed by the Province.

Pool and Rec center, for the few people that actually use the facilities the rest of the town pays almost 1/2 million dollars. Why?

Mayor and Council have tried to strike a balance of providing amenities to the public while balancing the costs to run the facilities. Mayor and Council has deemed these services to be a benefit to the community and have set service levels to reflect this. Should Council wish to change service levels, they may direct staff to change the yearly operational lengths of these services.

How come information is not distributed through Canada Post for those without online access?

Staff have requested that paper materials (budget) be left at Canada Post for distribution. Staff were informed that we were unable to do so. An 18-page single-sided copy is available for review at the business window adjacent to the post office.