
MEMORANDUM

JBM-C 3-2021

Subject: Regional Council Approval of 2021 Budget
Date: January 28, 2021
To: Joint Board of Management, Niagara Courts
From: Miranda Vink, Manager, Court Services

This memo is to advise that Niagara Regional Council approved the 2021 budget on Thursday, January 22, which includes the operating budget for Court Services.

Court Services' budget was approved as presented in reports: JBM-C 16-2020 on December 9, 2020; and, JBM-C 8-2020 on November 17, 2020. The 2021 Court Services gross operating budget has been approved in the amount of \$7,564,399, including a net budgeted revenue of \$1,360,348 with \$680,174 to be shared with the local area municipalities and \$680,174 to be allocated to the Niagara Region.

Below is a copy of the news release published on the Niagara Region's website regarding the approval of the 2021 budget:

Niagara Regional Council approves 2021 budget

At its meeting on Jan. 21, Niagara Regional Council approved a budget for 2021 that ensures the municipality can continue to provide a high level of service while minimizing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents.

The Niagara Region budget is made up of three components: the levy operating budget, rate operating budgets, and the capital budget. The 2021 operating budget contains an overall property tax increase of 1.8 percent to the taxpayer. For the average property assessed at \$278,764, the Regional portion of the tax bill will increase by \$29, totalling \$1,640 in 2021.

As part of 2021 budget deliberations, the Region undertook a comprehensive public engagement process. The budget engagement exercise reaffirmed our residents' desire

to see the Region continue to support population and economic growth initiatives and ensure Niagara's most vulnerable citizens are cared for.

Highlights of the budget:

- COVID-19 costs for 2021 estimated at \$17.8 million, fully funded with Safe Restart and other provincial funding to include a Pandemic Response Team that will allow Niagara Public Health to mitigate future risk to public health;
- West Lincoln Hospital Redevelopment Contribution - \$1.5 million annual contribution to reserve (for a \$12.6 million commitment) toward expansion of health services in west Niagara;
- EMS system transformation of \$1.3 million will continue to ensure high quality patient care while avoiding incremental costs of ambulances;
- An additional \$2 million or 0.5 per cent of the 2021 tax increase is dedicated to enhancing funding for critical infrastructure, such as roads reconstruction and bridge replacement;
- Use of \$4.3 million in reserves to mitigate the impacts of operating budget pressures on the taxpayers.

The operating budget for 2021 contains a tax levy of \$405.3 million, which funds the daily business of Niagara Region, its boards and agencies.

To help drive Council's vision for a prosperous and resilient region, the operating budget also supports a \$500.3 million approved capital program. The Region has allocated funding toward the construction of the South Niagara Falls Wastewater Treatment Facility, which will open up the area to population growth and new economic opportunities.

In December, Niagara Regional Council approved rate budget increases for 2021 of 2.0 percent for water and wastewater services combined and 4.5 percent for waste management.

The approved water and wastewater budgets are effective as of January 1, 2021, and billed to the local area municipalities based on water and wastewater usage following the Council approved methodology. As the wholesaler of water and wastewater services

in Niagara, the Region will bill the local municipalities, who will in turn incorporate the new rates into resident water bills.

In 2020, Niagara Region commenced new residential waste collection contracts. The municipality also transitioned to an every-other-week curbside collection that improves waste diversion targets. Costs for waste services are charged to municipalities based on special tax rates applied to the assessed value of households. Average households in Niagara can expect to pay up to an additional \$6.88 more for the year for waste services in 2021.

Quotes

"We know that residents and businesses are facing financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 budget reflects our efforts to ensure Niagara is responsive to this crisis while continuing to deliver the supports and services our residents rely on."

~ ***Jim Bradley, Regional Chair***

"Council approved a budget that maintains valued programs and services for our community but also ensures that we come out of this pandemic stronger. I want to thank residents for taking part in this budget process and my colleagues on Council for collaborating on a responsible financial plan for Niagara."

~ ***Gary Zalepa, Regional Councillor and Budget Chair***

"Staff worked diligently to ensure that residents would benefit from responsible use of their tax dollars during these difficult times. In 2021, we will continue to manage the financial impacts of the pandemic and work to ensure the Region recovers from it by providing necessary services to our residents."

~ ***Todd Harrison, Commissioner of Corporate Services and Treasurer***

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Miranda Vink
Manager, Court Services