



Report to Council

Department: Corporate Services
Division: Finance and Business Services
Date: June 20, 2022
Prepared by: Katelynn Giurissevich, Director, Corporate Services/Treasurer CPA, CA
Report Number: Finance and Business Services-2022-07
Subject: 2023 Essex Open Budget
Number of Pages: 5

Recommendation(s)

That Finance and Business Services-2022-07 entitled "2023 Essex Open Budget" prepared by Katelynn Giurissevich dated June 20, 2022 be received.

That Council endorses the 2023 Open Budget Plan.

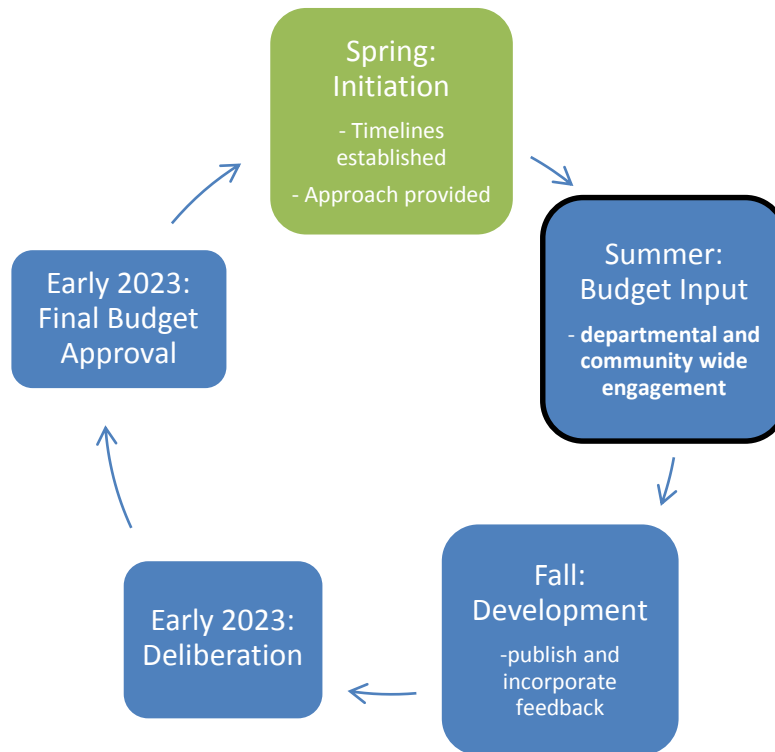
Purpose

To advise Council of the 2023 Budget Engagement Campaign.

Background and Discussion

The budget process for the Town of Essex is extensive. It spans over the course of nearly a year, with involvement from a wide range of stakeholders. The following illustration provides an overview of the "typical" budget process for a municipal organization.

Overview of the Budget Cycle



The Town, having published its Budget Initiation Memo at the May 16th meeting of Council is currently in the “Budget Input” stage of the budget cycle. Budget Engagement is an important part of the input stage, ultimately aiding in the formulation of the final municipal budget. Residents pay property taxes and in return use services and assets provided by the Town. As a result of their contributions, the residents play an important role in advising which services are important to them. The last form of Budget Engagement occurred in 2019 through a community survey which resulted in nominal responses. Administration, understanding how important this feedback is, is recommending a formalized plan be implemented for the 2023 Budget.

The Government Finance Officers Association released a “Best practices: Public Engagement in the Budget process” report in 2018 which detailed the important steps in implementing budget engagement into the annual budgeting process. These include:

- 1) Decide on Purpose of Public Engagement
- 2) Encourage People to Participate
- 3) Provide the Engagement Medium
- 4) Show Opportunities for Future Engagement

The two-phase plan below addresses these important steps.

The Open Budget Plan: #Engaging Essex: “An opportunity to learn and have your say on the 2023 Budget”

Phase 1 (2023 Budget Year)

- Development of Dedicated Budget Webpage
 - Links to all previously published budget documents
 - A newsfeed for budget updates and events
 - A budget calendar for upcoming and past milestones
 - Learning Tools such as Frequently Asked Questions and Budget 101 publications
 - Resident submitted Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) posted section
- FAQ Submission Period (Effective July 18th through to August 25th)
 - Through the webpage mentioned above, any stakeholders will have the opportunity to submit a budget related question
 - Administration will review and reply to these questions either directly through the website or to the submitter.
- Social media campaign

- Social Media posts throughout the entire budget process will encourage stakeholders to submit their FAQ through the webpage, drawing traffic to the webpage as well.
- Newspaper Advertisement will be published in local newspapers throughout the budgeting process advising of the engagement period, commentary period and official adoption period.

Phase 2 Considerations (2024-2026 Budget Years)

- Interactive Budget Tools Released to the webpage
- Participatory Budgeting Campaign Initiated

Financial Impact

Given that Phase 1 will rely on staff to create the content and develop and monitor the webpage, there is no financial impact. Phase 2 considerations do have financial impacts and those expenses will be presented in the Draft 2023 Budget.

Consultations

Marc Tortola, Manager, Communications

Link to Strategic Priorities

- ☒ Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.
- ☐ Create a safe, friendly and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.
- ☒ Provide a fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure long-term financial health to the municipality.
- ☐ Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.
- ☒ Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.
- ☐ Improve the Town's capacity to meet the ongoing and future service needs of its citizens while ensuring the corporation is resilient in the face of unanticipated changes or disruptions.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Introduction to 2023 Essex Open Budget - Finance and Business Services-2022-07.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 14, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doug Sweet', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Doug Sweet, Chief Administrative Officer - Jun 14, 2022 - 9:25 AM