

NORTH WELLINGTON Community News

Dedicated to the Municipalities of Northern Wellington

MAPLETON, MINTO & WELLINGTON NORTH

NORTH WELLINGTON Community News

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Wellington North tax rate increasing 4.9% in 2024

JORDAN SNOBELLEN
REPORTER

KENILWORTH – Wellington North council approved the 2024 budget at a Dec. 11 meeting. The budget process began with township department heads in September and council got its first look at a draft budget on Nov. 20, followed by a special budget meeting on Nov. 25.

The proposed increase to the township's tax rate for next year began at close to 6%, but was revised to 5% at council's request.

Township staff cut around \$5.2 million in capital projects from the budget to accomplish the rate reduction, including several road reconstruction projects, two proposed pedestrian crossings, playground equipment, a watermain, parking lot repaving and Mount Forest dam maintenance. These projects have been deferred to future years, but will eventually have to be completed.

Once new growth to the tax base is factored in, next year's tax increase to residents comes in at 4.9%.

For a residential home valued at \$271,636 (in 2016 dollars) the bill for the township's portion is \$1,468 – an increase of about \$66 for 2024.

Overall, the opening budget is increasing to \$9.64 million in 2024 from \$9 million this year.

The capital portion of the budget is increasing to \$9.77 million (not including a \$13.5-million upgrade to the Arthur wastewater treatment plant) from \$8.56 million this year.

Some of the notable expenses in the budget include:

- a sewer and an upper-hall renovation for the Arthur and Area Community Centre;
- new gear for volunteer firefighters;
- replacement of the Arthur ice resurfacer;
- upgrades to the Arthur pool;
- demolition of the old Lion Roy Grant pool in Mount Forest; and
- a new plow, tractor and pickup trucks.

North Wellington municipalities to receive \$4.1 million from OCIF

COMMUNITY NEWS STAFF

WELLINGTON COUNTY – Municipalities in northern Wellington County will receive about \$4.1 million from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF).

Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae announced on Dec. 14 municipalities in the riding will receive palatial in the fund in 2024 for \$14,668,702 from the fund in 2024 for the province's overall allocation of \$400 million through OCIF.

The County of Wellington will receive about \$2,764,871 through the fund, down from \$3,252,789 in 2023. For 2024 Mapleton has been allocated \$1,140,309, an increase from \$991,573 in 2023.

Minto will receive \$1,314,896, up from \$1,143,389 and Wellington North has been allocated \$1,682,295, a decrease from the 2023 allotment of 1,944,252.

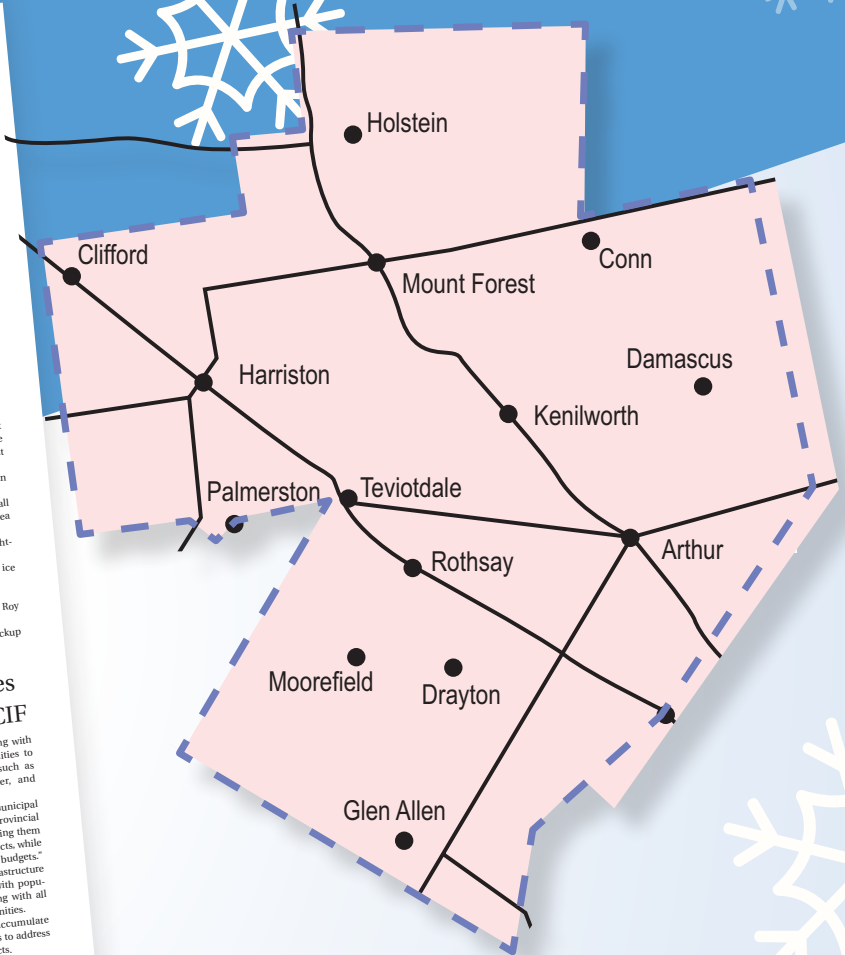
"Our government is working with our rural and small communities to build critical infrastructure such as roads, water and wastewater, and bridges," said Rae.

"We are ensuring our municipal partners can count on provincial infrastructure funding, allowing them to undertake necessary projects, while reducing the impact on their budgets." OCIF supports local infrastructure projects for communities with populations under 100,000, along with all rural and northern communities.

Municipalities may accumulate funding for up to five years to address larger infrastructure projects.

"We are very appreciative of the OCIF funding we receive as it helps reduce our infrastructure deficit," said Mapleton mayor Gregg Davidson.

"The extra funding this year will get us one step closer to our wastewater capacity support new home gro-



Santa visits Alma

It was a soggy St. Nick who waved to crowds from a decorated hay baler during the Santa Claus Parade in Alma on Dec. 17. Despite the rain a large crowd came prepared for the weather and enjoyed the long procession of colorful entries. Photos by Jordan Snobelen. More photos on page 3.

Era of Arthur Seniors Club may be ending with looming hall closure

JORDAN SNOBELLEN
REPORTER

ARTHUR – By June 30 the Arthur Seniors Club will have to vacate the "Senior Citizens Hall" on Isabella Street, where members have gathered since the 1970s.

The Township of Wellington North and its council has decided to evict the seniors six months after the current decade-long lease expires at the end of the month.

Some of the 51 seniors who meet weekly, if not daily, at the township-owned building, say there's nowhere else affordable to go.

A local Alcoholics Anonymous group that meets at the hall is also searching for an alternative meeting place, and local exercise classes for seniors will come to a stop, the

Community News has learned.

Around 20 club members urged council to sign a new lease earlier this year, but to no avail.

Township staff met with the club in July, proposing the club take over management of the building with a land lease and transfer of the building for \$1.

The club currently generates around \$3,500 per year from hall rentals, according to club treasurer Eleanor Monahan, and pays \$3,672 each year to the township to rent the building. The township covers utility bills.

As part of the township's proposal, the seniors' club would take over responsibility for building maintenance, servicing equipment and appliances, liquor licensing as well as insurance and utility bills, but the club

would no longer pay rent.

Municipal loans and grants were offered for major repairs and utility cover excessive insurance and utility expenses.

The township also offered to provide legal support to the club to help it register as a non-profit organization, a designation that would open more doors for government grants and tax rebates.

That was all turned down by the club in September, according to a Nov. 30 letter from Mayor Andy Lennox.

In the letter addressed to club president Bill Dennis, Lennox wrote that the seniors' group went a step further, requesting that any new lease agreement remove wording that pre-agreement remove wording that pre-

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