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Coming up at 6 pm it's budget delegation night. Here what your fellow Geulphies have to say about the 2024-2027 budget. Follow along with this thread.

guelphpolitico.ca/2023/11/05/cit...

Mayor Guthrie has called the meeting to order.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof? None.

So there are about 20 delegates, and everyone gets 5 minutes. Beware the chime at 30 seconds...



Guthrie adds that council may have follow up that will be posted in the form of questions on the budget board. We'll go through all the delegations and then end with any follow up for staff.

First up, Stephanie Clarke for the Guelph Tool Library is not here due to illness, so we go straight to #2, which is John Denis, also of the Guelph Tool Library. He notes that the GTL is on the bring of 30,000 loans.



Denis is asking the City to continue with their support to help reduce waste and upcycle items (they've diverted several tonnes of waste). Their services also include a second hand store and the Seed Library. They hope to expand and continue to serve the community

Steven Petric, Chair of the Transit Action Alliance of Guelph is next. He highlights critical issues if the transit service expansion are delayed, and that it's alarming that the City is considering those deferrals. Need to treat transit like a service, not a business.

Petric says that delays will aggravate affordability and environmental goals. Also asks for the City to find better ways to use the portions of the gas tax revenue to expand service and get more service available.

Up next is a name I don't recognise.

Ronak Patel doesn't seem to be here, so we go to Nelson Chukwuma, president of Conestoga Students Inc, repping 40k students including 2k in Guelph.

He's also concerned about delays to implementing the transit strategy, and how it impacts housing. Council has said that transit improvements are also meant to improve access to housing, some neighbourhoods are not an option.

He says high ridership is already causing issues, essentially service is not keeping up with demand. It exceeds capacity. Chukwuma wants to see the schedule commitments keep up since many new routes affect Conestoga's campus on Speedvale.

Mike Darmon, head of activism of Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation, is not up. He says he appreciates the challenges of the budget, but hopes the City will prioritise improving active transportation, especially considering recent deaths of people at busy crossings.

He says that a City's vision is shown in the budget and praises Kitchener's creation of 3 km of protected cycling. Need to expand network here to help underserved community and make amenities for people to enjoy. Would like to see extend. TCC to Victoria.

Adrian Salvatore, also of GCAT, is next. He says 10.3% increase is not acceptable in a time of struggling affordability, says it's important to lower this increase. Need to ask how we got here, but differing stuff haphazardly isn't the option, need to think smarter, long-term

Salvatore says we need more high density, it offers more bang for the budget, and it also supports the call for better active transportation. Rethinking road widenings is a good call, but why subsidise parking? City spends millions supporting car-based infrastructure.

John Fisher of the Guelph Hiking Trail Club is next. He says he represents nearly 500 stakeholders that want the G2G completed, but he's not here to ask for money. Guelph community has a history of supporting amenities it feels strongly about.

Fisher asks council to have staff to give the community permission to raise money and manage a campaign to support the completion of the G2G trail at the north end of the city. What does that involve? Check this out: guelphpolitico.ca/2023/07/12/gue...

Ian Digby from the Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team is next. They're requesting funding for a physician recruitment strategy along with the Guelph Wellington Physician Association. Two years of funding will be used to develop a strategy to encourage more docs to come here.

Digby says 35 new physicians will need to be recruited for Guelph plus 25 for the County. This is in addition to the usual turnover. He notes that it's competitive out there, and all our surrounding communities have this kind of recruitment campaign.

The health team is asking for \$43,335 per year for two years. The project has a \$130k annual budget with funding from other sources and in kind donations.

Goller asks about Chamber and County support. Digby says that the County did approve this in October, Chamber has pledged mostly in-kind support and been at the table since the beginning.

Caron asks what happens if the City can't come up with full amount. Digby says they would accept a reduced amount, but this is a reasonable budget to recruit the right individual but they know the City's under fiscal pressures.

Maureen McCafferty appears to not be here, so we're moving on to Barb Minett, co-founder of the Bookshelf. She talks about her recent delegation to Police Board, and asks council to think about DT insecurity. She knows opinions are in flux and substance use is a growth industry.

Minett talks about IMPACT. She supports the program as part of the police budget and would like to see 3 dedicated officers with mental health support. She asks police to work with Rev. Coghill at RCM for some ideas & notes that cars from other communities are dropping people off

O'Rourke asks Minett's feelings about additional funding for IMPACT in the budget. Minett says she's not sure Welcoming Streets have the training to deal with more complex issues.

Mike Salisbury from the Guelph Centre for Visual Art. He says the double digit increase to the budget sounds like a good time to get out of politics. He's not asking for money, but he's asking council to recognise Drill Hall as tier 2 project and a full project for DT renewal.

Salisbury says these changes help keep the Drill Hall from thinking it's a stranded asset. These actions are largely symbolic but you can't ask people to come to the table without setting one. The building's been stabilised but not there for community use yet.

Caron asks if fundraising is ready to begin if a decision is made. Salisbury notes that staff has not yet made a decision about procurement, he's here b/c regardless of what happens, he doesn't want the project to "fall of the books." But yes they're ready.

Downer asks if this project could be akin to the GYMCA, a community effort. Salisbury says yes, where they're at is that project is ready to move forward but they need that community engagement. Also, nothing they've proposed hasn't already been done elsewhere.

Next, Julia Grady, the executive director of 10C, along with Dr. Jess Haines, 10C's board chair. 10C has created a 62 per cent increase in use of the Farmer's Market, and have begun a phased construction project for \$2 million.

They've secured \$800k in funding and need over \$1 million more, but nearly half of that will be paid back as indicated below.

10C has already upgraded the HVAC systems and have created new all-gender washrooms in the building. With City support they can continue scoping the renovations and be complete by Fall 2024.

Caron asks if the 37% ask b/c 10C is taking it easy on the City or do they have the funds ready. Grady says that the community benefit agreement with the City says to seek matching funds. They got federal funds w/ 1-year timeline, and they got basics done first.

Lindsay Sprague and Cory Gillies from the Sanguen Health Centre van team are next. Council is getting the same presentation that was given to the Wellington County Social Services committee back in October. pub-guelph.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?file=10C%20Community%20Benefit%20Agreement%20Presentation%202024.pdf

At this month's meeting, the County approved \$90,718 in funding to help see the health van through next year as they seek new ongoing funding to replace lost funds that can no longer receive from the federal government.

Busuttil asks how long they've been providing the service. The answer is 2016, and they were funded through a Trillium grant at the time.

Busuttil asks if they have a contingency. The delegates says they've looked at many grants, most looking for pilots not ongoing funding.

Busuttil asks about the amount they're looking for. Delegates say \$90k, and that's on top of the \$11k they get from a CBA through the City presently.

Allt asks about success with other sources. Sprague says that they get funds from TD, but that's split with Waterloo. They presently have funding requests with Rotary and United Way, they're also looking to Fed and ONgvs.

Next, Pat Fung. Comparing Guelph to Barrie, he says Guelph is costing 25% more for the same service. Also, he's mad that the money that the City spent on city pages in the Mere-Trib is not reflected in the budget (?). 4.3% of money in Guelph goes to taxes vs 3.9% in ON average.

He says that the City should have 100 per cent control of the budget, get spending under control by attacking the base. He says he worked with Cllr O'Rourke worked an org where they cut 10% of the staff and that org marches on.

Next, Dustin Davis, Guelph and District Association of REALTORS (joining by video). He says he's here to speak on behalf of 60k households in the City and asks council to do the

hard work and lower the 10.3 per cent increase.

Recommendations from GDAR

- 1) Hiring freeze or hire less than 11
- 2) DCs an involving issues, too early to build contingency. Defer it.
- 3) Look for costs savings in corporate and governance.

On that last one, Davis says that council should cancel funding to cover the costs of going to FCM and AMO as these are extravagances that the city can't afford right now.

Second-to-last, Shakiba Shayani, President and CEO Guelph Chamber of Commerce. She says she shares many frustrations with council on this budget and she's here to share the business case. Businesses in Guelph facing many local and global challenges.

-labour challenges exacerbated by housing

-social issues downtown

-inflation

-potential economic slowdown

Also concerned that the there's no framework or decision making strategy to understand the budget. Feels like we're not future ready, just treading water.

Shayani says she doesn't want to come back year over year and keep talking about the uncertain about the effects of the next tax increase. Doesn't want to keep doing the same thing and expecting different results.

O'Rourke asks if the chamber finds it reasonable to extend transit plan over 12 years, not 10. Shayani says she's having a hard time answering that, b/c they do believe everything is important, but hope to plan for the implications, what happens when you reduce funding for A,B,C?

O'Rourke asks where else Shayani would like to see investment. She says its unclear what it looks like to say yes or no to more or less investment. And that goes for every item and plan.

So what to tell people about impact? Shayani says it's important to understand that there is a compounding effect on people, 10.3 per cent on their home and 10.3 on their business.

Caron asks about networking with other chambers in regards to holding ONgov accountable. Shayani says they're working regionally to nationally, but would like Guelph to come to the table as a team and take a collective approach for community-wide advocacy.

Allt asks about examples about her struggles to understand the analysis. Shayani says they have a sense of what the City wants to accomplish, and there's a number in the budget, but they don't know how it overlays one on top of the other. Not to suggest that doesn't exist.

Allt asks who all should be at the table as Shayani was discussion above. She says anyone that has an interest and wants to advance the agenda should have a seat at the table.

Gibson asks if Shayani has heard any concerns about the other 3 years. She says that it's not lost that the increase over four years is substantial, but there is opportunity to be nimble with the yearly check-in.

Guthrie asks if the Chamber membership realises that this is the first year of ONgov not keeping us whole, and the County putting an extra \$4 million for homelessness on the City.

Shaynai says yes, we're in an impossible, frustrating situation.

This is why we need that different approach to advocacy, Shayani adds. Guthrie asks if there's a disconnect in \$ amount and outcome, or communications? Shayani says probably latter.

Last speaker, Craig Dool, appears to not be here so that brings us to the end of the list.

Guthrie says again that there could be takeaways for the budget board later. For now, there are no questions for staff.

Reminder, there's a council workshop a week from tonight to look at further budget options. Guthrie adds that there will a chance for councillors to announce intentions.

Reminder:

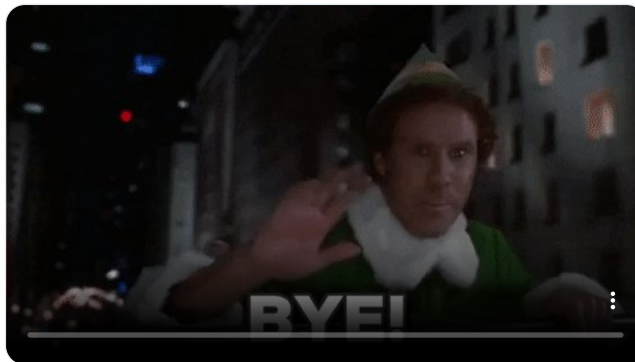
Ward 5 town hall is tomorrow night at Harcourt

Ward 1 is Monday at Vic Road at 5 pm.

Ward 2 is Monday at City Hall at 7 pm.

Ward 4 is next Thursday at West End Rec Centre

That's a wrap!



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

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