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That's a wrap for this meeting!

The budget delegation night meeting starts in 45 minutes.



The people are streaming in for the start of the budget delegation night meeting. Preview:



City Council Preview – What's on the Agenda for the November 19, 202...

If you have thoughts about the budget, you couldn't make it out to any of the town halls, and you've forgotten the password to your email account, then this is your chance to tell the m...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2024/11/08/city-council-preview-whats-on-the-agenda-for-the-...>

Mayor Guthrie has called the meeting to order.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof? Nope.

Guthrie begins by thanking everyone for coming. Remarks that there were updates to the budget at the end of last week, and he wants everyone to be made aware of them.

- Non-market housing reserve increase by \$305k
- \$300k added for basic needs table
- Welcoming Streets reinstated for \$202k
- Tool Library getting \$62k

- 2.5% phase-in for youth sports rental vs 5%
- CBA review coming
- Transit route 5 will get its expanded frequency
- High school transit pilot will be expanded to all-day in July and August.
- Affordable bus pass will be free for Tier A and B
- Forestry \$200k increase
- Seed money for bicentennial \$100k.
- Increased capital on select projects.

Also, \$75k to implement Cultural Plan, accessibility to playgrounds, and some water conservation measures have been reinstated too.

First delegate is Nathan Lawr. He's here to talk about the Culture Plan, and been a part of many convos with arts orgs about the state of the creative community and the mood is grim. The feel pretty sidelined. The arts scene is succeeding in spite of the city, not b/c of it.

Lawr is getting pretty emotional saying that it felt like the original spend on the Culture Plan wasn't enough, though he appreciates that some of that money has been put back in. People are moved and inspired by the arts, they're not an extravagance.

Lawr asks about potential changes. He says that it's weird that arts orgs are having to compete for the same pot of money with social services when it comes to community grants. Also, the economic benefits are huge, so why aren't we treating them like they're valuable.

Next, Michelle Peek from Art Not Shame. She says Guelph is at a crossroads and arts programs are under threat. Failing to invest in programs now will have consequences down the road. Art Not Shame is working to create space for the arts, especially w/equity seeking communities...

...Peek says that they need more stable funding, which is why they applied for \$100k in CBA earlier this year. She says that every \$1 spent gives \$13 back to the community.

Next, Norma Mendoza also of Art Not Shame. She also notes that these organisations transform and save lives. She says Guelph is failing it's own arts and culture agenda, how are the next generation of artists being nurtured with cuts to the sector?

Next, Julia Grady and Scarlett Raczynski from the City's own Public Art Advisory Committee. They're also looking for city council to step up and follow through on funding the Culture Plan. While they appreciate the budget edits, it's not enough in the short term.

Virginia Andersen is next. She says that the hours of work in getting the budget to 4% was only worth about \$18/month. Was it worth it? She talks about transportation, owning a car vs bus pass, and the delay of active transportation impacts that even more.

Anderson: Transportations costs make up 15% of household budget, so can't we move to a faster implementation of investments in trails and transit. All kinds of ancillary benefits.

Next, Claire Cowan from the Guelph Tool Library. She thanks the mayor for adding their CBA funding back into the budget. She listing a recital of Library programs that benefit the cause of waste diversion and affordability.

We're skipping a couple of people on the list, and going to Ben Cullen from Guelph Urban Forest Friends. He says he might stray from the "GUFF consensus".

Cullen says that he imagines that this has been a frustrating budget process, and thanks the mayor for listening. But... When we're doing the bare minimum on investment, we're only going to get the minimum in return. Need to act boldly to fight climate crisis.

Next is David Douglas from Guelph Climate Action Network (GCAN). He says this budget process is illegitimate, and the Strong Mayor Powers are a gross violation of democratic process. He wants to see the City do more on climate adaptation.

John Steggles, from the Guelph Community Action Network is next, and he also has concerns about cuts to spending on environmental issues. We should quadruple that funding.

Now, Donna Jennison who also has a beef with Strong Mayor powers and passing bylaws with 1/3 support. She's against the Strong Mayor Budget in principle, and she's also against proposed cuts to environmental programs, especially now.

Byron Ready, from the Guelph Skateboarding Committee, is up now. He's got concerns about delays to trail and parks and rec investments. He talks about the positives of skateboarding, and the decision to delay two new skate parks, is a bad call.

Melissa Maher (and her daughter) is next. They're also concerned about the delay in getting new skateboarding facilities, since that's an interest to Maher's daughter. It's resulted in great resilience and confidence, skills that will last into adulthood.

Next, Colin DeMill and his daughter Sadie. They're also both skate rats looking to see those facilities move forward. It's allowed Sadie to find friendship and community, and overcome anxiety and build confidence. More kids, girls and parents taking part in the sport.

Colin says that they need more facilities because his son was a skater and now is afraid because he got hit by a BMX bike. Need more facilities because the Silvercreek Park is so busy. Even Georgetown with 50k people, has two parks. Also, it's a cheap activity.

Next is Andrea Bidgood, vice-chair of Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation. She says that active transportation users are looking for constancy and many are looking for reasons not to drive. Also, there have been a couple of recent deaths for cyclists and pedestrians.

Next is Ariel Stagni. He says the skate community has made good use of the facilities Guelph has, but new facilities will help make it equitable for the whole city. He works for the City of Toronto and notes that they have 14 projects planned for next three years.

Mike Darmon from GCAT is next. He's disappointed about the impact on active transportation plan, but glad cycling master plan was untouched. There will be a need for new trails to connect thousands of new residents.

Next is Morgan Dandie. She says it feels like déjà vu, we make transit plans and then the wheels come off the bus (so to speak). She says it's an affordability issue.

Up next...



Next is Jason Szewc from GCAT. He's concerned about the trail connecting under the rebuilt Speedvale bridge. Without proper connections these things lose their value. Need to see all these projects holistically.

Next is Martin Collier from Residents for a Safe Speedvale Avenue. His beef is the Emma-Earl bridge and how if the budget for that were cancelled then the money could be used for other projects.

Guthrie calls a 10-minute break. The last 12 delegates will begin after that...



Mayor Guthrie calls the meeting back to order. We're going to backwards for a minute and hear from Michelle Watterson, from Guelph Girls Hockey Association.

Watterson (who says there's no affiliation with minor hockey) says that they've been unable to grow the last 10 years due to limited ice time. 1 in 3 girls drop out of sports by their teens compared to 1 in 10 boys, facilities access is a big issue.

She also says that there's a financial barrier too, which is why the youth subsidy is so important. Cost is a barrier to all kinds of people for all kinds of sports.

Casey MacMillan and Carolyn McLeod-McCarthy from the Guelph Food Bank are next. They're looking for support for the new satellite sites for the GFB, and note that they're facing the same budget crunch on rent the community is.

McLeod-McCarthy says that they're partnering with as many groups as possible to answer the rising need and are sharing responsibility to fund their services, including running a re-use store which funds food services.

McLeod-McCarthy notes that in their 35 year history, they haven't received any funding from the government, but they need help to expand those satellite services.

Cllr Gibson asks if the GFB has ever looked at a Community Benefit Agreement. McLeod-McCarthy this is new territory for her and the org, and are looking to work with the GNSC about finding locations.

Busuttil asks if there's a need for rent and/or staff? McLeod-McCarthy says they're looking for both and will be taking point on volunteer recruitment for the neighbourhood groups.

O'Rourke asks about the satellite program. McLeod-McCarthy says that they're not just working with GNSC but church groups as well, looking at neighbourhood pantries and how they can be augmented. The model hasn't been fleshed out yet.

Caton asks about the GFB's means testing vs food pantry's barrier-free approach. McLeod-McCarthy says they're not taking over, they're supplementing. They vet people, but they go on a "trust system" now and moved several of their own barriers.

Caton: What if someone doesn't have i.d.?

McLeod-McCarthy: We don't turn people away, if they need food, we provide it.

Guthrie: How much?

McLeod-McCarthy: Don't know, have to fund the spaces and they are getting reduced rent at some locations, but they're not sure what's all in.

Guthrie: So perhaps there will be opportunities to engage thru 2025?

McLeod-McCarthy: Yes, looking for sustainable 🏡

Next is Hayden Stewart, associate VP from Conestoga Students Inc. He's asking for strategic investments in transit, active transportation and housing. These are essential to support diverse needs in the community.

Stewart asks to see the 98 Speedvale route come into effect with their new Upass in fall 2025 (which won't happen b/c of Speedvale reconstruction at Woolwich), and for a landlord registry and/or rental strategy.

Kristen Cairney from Wyndham House is next. She thanks the City for the work on the Affordable Housing Strategy and notes that working on non-market deeply affordable housing is the real solution to housing needs. She says Guelph is recognised nationally for its efforts.

Klassen asks if the City is going far enough with the funding they've put into the project. Cairney says she's not sure, but it's not nothing either.

Goller asks about how much money Wyndham House would need to get their next housing project is going. Cairney says it would be about \$600,000. Guthrie notes that decisions about the Affordable Housing Reserve have to go through the County.

Next, Dominica McPherson from Task Force for Poverty Elimination. She says that she's noticed a shift from solving crises to managing them, and increases to affordable housing reserve is a positive step forward. Also need to act urgently to stop loss of aff. housing.

Busuttill asks about the need for public housing. McPherson says that the City can compliment more broader investment and it helps position the City has a key player in providing that deeply affordable housing that's needed.

Tay Anton is next. Their focus is on harm reduction and concerns about the closure of the CTS. He realises that these things are decided at Queen's Park, but he calls out Guthrie for support it, and says some people in the community have already paid for these choices w/ lives.

Goller asks for a point of order, is this budget related? Anton says they'll get there and Guthrie says it's fine and "he can take it". He says the municipality will pay more for the CTS closure, but their concern is not more EMS, but the loss of life.

Next is Jamie Mendoza. She says she's shocked with the line items that have deprioritised, and good decision-making means taking into account impact on quality of life services. Need more community investment or else the community will suffer.

Next is Susan Ratcliffe, who has been at the forefront of concern about the lack of funding for the bicentennial. She notes that the equivalent funding for Guelph's 150th would be about \$8 million, this budget gives us about \$100k.

S*san W*atson is next. She says when it comes to her concerns about the shortfall in DCs "really takes the cake". The projected shortfall according to her, are \$17 million. She (rhetorically) asks where the developers are tonight?



Last two delegates starting with Ryan Meunier. He says it's amazing all the people want to support in this community, and council has a tough decision, but survival trumps everything. Household budgets trump everything, and council needs to manage the household.

Meunier says he doesn't feel like any level of government is there to serve the people, the social and legal obligation, he says, is being violated because it's not respectful of the people. Guelph should lead by example.

Goller asks Meunier how he finds 4%, and he says it's simple: households have to work within their envelope, and while he recognises that the value of his house is inflated, he says the increases are becoming "threatening".

Caron makes the point that only 9 cents of every tax dollar goes to city, is Meunier making the same case to the ONgov? Maunier says he told Guthrie that he should go to QP and draw a line in the sand, and that power comes from the municipal level. Should be pushing back!

Gibson says the municipalities are getting blamed for not getting housing going, asks if it's acceptable to grow *budget* by 4-6 per cent per year to keep up with growth? Maunier says he's concerned about "green stuff"...

...and says he questioned MP Longfield about allowing all this extra immigration and also raising the carbon tax to fight climate change. Immigrants come here and consume like all of us do.

We're now in a point of order off, with Allt saying we're off topic this is about the budget and not immigrations. Asks last comments be stricken. Meunier says he apologises, he didn't intend to offend anyone.

Allt raises a point of personal privilege: His cough is not infectious.
"We didn't need to know that," Guthrie said.

And finally, Amelia Meister. She says that this is a non-democratic budget since it was created using Strong Mayor powers, and this after he personally promised her in an email that he wouldn't use them. She asks Guthrie to go back to the approved 2025 budget last year.

Guthrie thanks all the delegates. Asks council to get all budget questions in ASAP and asks them to get all motions into staff by Friday (or noon at Monday at the latest).

Intentions?

-Goller says he wants to increase affordable housing reserve further, getting to 100 RE, and active transportation.

-Gibson says there's a small item for '25, design of Beaumont community park.

-Caron climate action, 100 RE and urban canopy for her. Also, bicentennial needs to be fully funded b/c they'll asking community to make those investments.

-Caton looking at accessibility needs, Art Not Shame and evaluation of Alectra stock.

-Klassen wants to talk about increase community grants and separation of streams. Also, public art funding.

-O'Rourke wants to look at phase-in of parking fees increase, and the Culture Plan

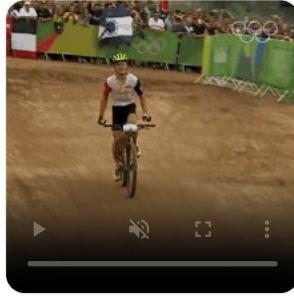
-Billings says she'll move the to pay hospital levy from different source.

Budget board closes on Friday, Guthrie says.

Nothing further from staff.

Guthrie says they're sitting at 3.21% from the City side, adding outside boards and the levy, could be looking at 5.2 to 5.5% and that's before any of these additions and/or if County and Police come in higher. Urges everyone to understand impact.

Meeting adjourned!



@threadreaderapp unroll please.

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