



**Adam A. Donaldson** @adamadonaldson

Nov 27, 2024 · 100 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1861770331427340339](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1861770331427340339)

Welcome to Budget Day at #Guelph City Hall. Here's where we begin:



**City Council Preview – What's on the Agenda for the November 27, 202...**

And we reach the grand finale of this year's budget confirmation process, or we don't. This could be the end of the budget process, but on the other hand there might be vetos and the re...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2024/11/15/city-council-preview-whats-on-the-agenda-for-the-...>

Also, need to program this area b/c of talk in past years about putting container homes here.

Caton agrees, this area is kind of landlocked and no crosswalks to go across the street to the OR Lands. Habitat project in the area and a lot of folks in the area with disabilities who could use amenity close to home.

Gibson motion passes unanimously.

Caton/Gibson move this one. Increasing 2026 operating to build it.

## Budget Amendment – 1.2



### Councillor Caton

1. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2026 operating budget by \$815,000 for capital financing transfers to the growth reserve funded by the tax levy through the 2026 budget update and advancing capital project PK0198 Beaumont Park from 2029 to 2026 in the amount of \$665,000 and including an additional \$150,000 investment for a rubber surfacing bringing the total construction budget to \$815,000, with operating impacts of \$14,700 moving from 2030 to 2027 funded by the tax levy.
2. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor decreases the transfer to the growth reserve by \$815,000 through the 2027 budget update, reducing the tax levy.

Downer says she has the same question, does this bump any other playground? O'Dwyer says it doesn't since this motion adds funding.

Gibson asks about potential DCs to help capital for this park. O'Dwyer says it's complicated, funded thru DCs, but the forecast relies on inter-reserve borrowing because of the phase in of DC/fees deferrals. So technically, it does mean a tax increase to make room to fund it.

Gibson: So is this an advance?

O'Dwyer: It's not managed in a specific way, the reserve fund will go into a negative balance to fund this, and the interest paid to reserves with positive balance will replenish it.

O'Rourke asks if this was meant to align with York Road work? DCAO Clack-Bush says no, the timeline was developed through separate process, but they will work with engineering.

O'Rourke: No budget impact in 2025 from this?

Staff: No, only the design work.

Guthrie says these things are linked, so doesn't want to fund the design and then leave design on shelf. it's approved unanimously.

Next, money for Board and Committee Co-ordinator. Moved by Caton seconded by Klassen.

## **Budget Amendment – 2**



### **Councillor Caton**

1. That Council amend Guelph's 2025 budget update by increasing the 2025 operating budget by \$56,700 to advance budget request number 000937 Board and Committee Coordinator from 2026.
2. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers subsequently moving the 50 per cent phase in of the position in the operating budget in the amount of \$53,600 from 2027 to 2026, funded by the tax levy.

Gibson: What's the work plan for this position?

McMahon: Changes to ACOCs coming for final passage in March, and that requires new person in clerks office. Without it, it means there needs to be a more staggered implementation of ACOC changes.

Gibson asks if this was in the original budget. McMahon says it was in the multiyear budget, not in the mayor's 2025 proposed update. Guthrie noted that the reason why it wasn't in was b/c that report won't come back till March.

Another motion is coming about covering the cost of training. There is a piece of the ACOC review about the honorarium for committee members, but that wasn't in any budget.

O'Rourke asks about staffing impact for 2025 election(s). McMahon says that they're ready for 2026, and ready to handle by-election if needed. Don't directly support ON or CDN elections.

Guthrie: So if council agrees with ACOC changes, without this motion, the changes won't go into effect till 2026?

McMahon: Yes, there may be some changes with existing funds, but there would be domino effect for other governance implementations.

Guthrie: We should support it

Caton says that she would like to bring the transit and daycare reimbursements up to be more timely, and they need the staff position to do it.

Passes 12-1 (Billings against)

Guthrie adds that Hamilton is voting today to eliminate all citizen appointment committees. There were gasps.

Next Caton motion. It is for 2026 because even with onboarding the new staff member, they won't be able to get started to 2026. Allt seconds and it passes.

### **Budget Amendment – 3**



#### **Councillor Caton**

1. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2026 operating budget by \$50,000 and reducing the 2027 operating budget by \$50,000 through the 2026 budget update to advance budget request number 001361 Advisory Committees Reimbursement and Training from 2027 into 2026, funded by the tax levy.

Next from Goller, \$400k to affordable housing reserve in 2026. Busuttill seconds.

### **Budget Amendment – 4**



#### **Councillor Goller**

1. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2026 operating budget by \$400,000 for a transfer to the Affordable Housing Reserve funded by the tax levy through the 2026 budget update.

Gibson asks if \$400k is equal to what City is contributing via reduced DCs and fees? Maybe that's a comment, he says. O'Dwyer says she has 10-year estimate, which is nearly \$50mn. (That's based on last 5 years, not the target for next 8)

Gibson notes that a better motion in principle is to pass a motion that says the City prepare itself to donate \$50mn to the cause of building affordable housing. Guthrie says he's forgotten the \$21.3 mn from the Housing Accelerator Fund.

Gibson says it's still an important message whether council supports this motion or not. Does want optics to outweigh that fact.

O'Rourke says there seems to be competing goals with this reserve, how can they talk about the intent of this fund? Staff says when HAS comes back next month, it will identify the gaps, and one of those may be the seed program, and that work will come back in Q1.

O'Rourke says they could revisit this when the HAS comes back and there's no impact today. Staff say yes.

Allt says he struggles with the transparency of this, and council should consider freezing receipt of any requests until they get those terms.

Goller says relying on the private market to build housing doesn't seem to be working, and they had Wyndham House already here saying that they will need funds for their new project. Wants to incentivise those types of developments.

Goller motion approved unanimously.

Another Goller motion concerning 100 RE. Caron seconds.

## **Budget Amendment – 5.1**



### **Councillor Goller**

1. That Council amends the 2025 operating budget by increasing the transfer to the 100RE reserve fund by \$996,133 and restoring operating investment in climate change initiatives in the amount of \$153,867, funded through the property tax levy (total of \$1,150,000 increase in the operating budget in 2025); and increasing the 2025 capital budget by \$996,133 for capital project GG0261 100RE Initiatives funded by the 100RE Reserve Fund; and
2. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2026 operating budget by \$153,867 for a transfer to the 100RE reserve fund, funded through the property tax levy, and including a capital budget of \$1,150,000 in capital project GG0261 100RE Initiatives in 2026 and 2027 funded by the 100RE Reserve Fund; and
3. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2028 operating budget by \$500,000 for a transfer to the 100RE reserve fund, funded through the property tax levy, and including a capital budget of \$1,650,000 for GG0261 100RE Initiatives in each year from 2028 to 2034 funded by the 100RE Reserve Fund.

Gibson wonders if they can separate the three, since they're impacting three different budgets. What was removed from work plan, and what going in for 2025? DCAO Holmes says entire 100RE was removed, retrofits and energy efficient changes to other projects. Doesn't have list

Gibson: Isn't 100RE consideration in capital projects?

Holmes: This primarily is for repair replacement, but if there's new tech or new opportunity after budget approved, it's a top up.

Gibson says this feels discretionary and would like to see 2025 impact without and then revisit next year.

O'Rourke asks if they would be seeking grant money to cover this? Holmes says they're always looking for money, wants to be clear though if there's one chance to replace a boiler in

the moment, that's what this money is used for. Otherwise, you get stuck with inefficient option

Guthrie says he's not there for the full amount, maybe something less. Goller asks for support b/c there's a climate crisis and they have to play a leadership role. Asking community to do retrofits, seems right that City does too.

#1: Passes 9-4 (Billings, Guthrie, Chew, Gibson against)

#2: Passes unanimously.

#3: Passes unanimously.

## **Budget Amendment – 5.1**



### **Councillor Goller**

1. That Council amends the 2025 operating budget by increasing the transfer to the 100RE reserve fund by \$996,133 and restoring operating investment in climate change initiatives in the amount of \$153,867, funded through the property tax levy (total of \$1,150,000 increase in the operating budget in 2025); and increasing the 2025 capital budget by \$996,133 for capital project GG0261 100RE Initiatives funded by the 100RE Reserve Fund; and
2. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2026 operating budget by \$153,867 for a transfer to the 100RE reserve fund, funded through the property tax levy, and including a capital budget of \$1,150,000 in capital project GG0261 100RE Initiatives in 2026 and 2027 funded by the 100RE Reserve Fund; and
3. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2028 operating budget by \$500,000 for a transfer to the 100RE reserve fund, funded through the property tax levy, and including a capital budget of \$1,650,000 for GG0261 100RE Initiatives in each year from 2028 to 2034 funded by the 100RE Reserve Fund.

Next, increase to community grants moved by Klassen/Goller:

## **Budget Amendment – 6**



### **Councillor Klassen**

1. That Council amend the 2025 budget update by increasing the operating budget by \$167,400 to increase the base budget for Community Grants to a total of \$500,000, funded by the tax levy.

Billings asks where we are right now in terms of levy increase. O'Dwyer says they will crunch those numbers...

Klassen wants to be clear his is not for the CBA, these are for the community grants and this program benefits social services, the arts, and the numbers haven't been looked at it a long time while the funding requests have increased.

Approximately 65 groups get community grants, and there has been an increased demand in last 3 years. The requests are worth about twice as much as what they give out.

O'Rourke asks about the mechanism to talk about the policy governing this. GM of intergovernmental Sales says there will be a review of the CBA program in 2025 and that will inform work on the community granting, which is in 2026.

Update on the numbers:

3.61% for city services

2.42% for local boards

6.03% increase total right this minute.

Gibson says he's getting uncomfortable with the number. Affordability is a crisis too, and if there was no program, there would be no money for anyone. Telling homeowners and businesses were taking more from you and giving to others who may be doing good work.

Gibson says call him "Scrooge" if you wish.

Guthrie: So this would be a base increase. This would be the number going forward?

Staff: Yes.

Guthrie: Is there any reporting about the impact?

Sales: We can do that.

Guthrie noted that the applications closed last week, but some people could have \*not\* applied not knowing this was coming. Could the City re-open applications?

Klassen says that wasn't the intention.

Klassen says that this would be for 2026, but though it had to be in 2025 budget. Sales says it was staff impression that this was money for 2025.

Guthrie says if this meant to insure more people in 2025 are successful. Staff says yes, that's their view of intention.

So more money for 2025 now?

Klassen says okay.

Caron says she'll support b/c they have not kept pace with demand.

O'Rourke asks if they're going to re-open the process?

The answer is no.

O'Rourke: Then does it not make sense to make this for '26?

Sales: The applications for 2025 just closed on Friday, and successful applicants will be informed in Jan/Feb '25.

Gibson asks to move an amendment: replace 2025 with 2026. Chew seconds.

Amendment fails 6-7 with Goller, Klassen, Allt, Downer, Richardson, Caron, and Caton against.

## Budget Amendment – 6



### Councillor Gibson

- 1. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing 2026** budget update by increasing the operating budget by \$167,400 to increase the base budget for Community Grants to a total of \$500,000, funded by the tax levy.

Back to original motion. Busuttil says that's important to see this as a move to affordability. Many of these orgs have impact on affordability through their services.

Guthrie says the council's role is to fund an envelope, cautions council not to address specific groups, though they can talk about general areas. Caton agrees saying that this is a process to make things equitable and making sure there's enough help.

Downer notes that there are many issues around affordability that these help address. Allt says he will support and heard many delegates concerned about support for poverty and culture, only one delegate about tax rate impact. Real concern in community.

Allt says that one person mention that the community is doing their part and a perception that the city is not doing there's. Guthrie says he's almost calling a point of personal privilege but won't.

O'Rourke asks if there will be a separation of arts and culture and social services. Sales says that's how it used to be, but it was changed to one pot to be more flexible. They have heard feedback to change back, and that's part of the review.

Gibson says in defence of the work the City is doing, he doesn't think a comment out City Hall not doing enough should stand. He says western civilisations have had gov'ts pop up saying that we can tax our way out of poverty, but it just makes the bread lines longer.

Guthrie has an amendment he believes is worthwhile, sent it to Klassen. But on this motion passes 10-3 (Chew, Billings and Gibson against).

Klassen (Guthrie) amendment seconded by Goller.

## Budget Amendment



1. That each subsequent budget, starting in 2026, be amended to reflect an of rate of inflation to keep pace with community grant funding needs.



Passes 10-3 (Gibson, O'Rourke and Billings against)

Klassen/Allt move this one. Klassen says it was originally in 2025 budget, wants to put it back because Art policy and Culture plan both discussed last year so now they need to fund it.

## **Budget Amendment – 7**



### **Councillor Klassen**

1. That Council amend the 2025 budget update by increasing the operating budget by \$100,000 to transfer to the Public Art Reserve, funded by the tax levy.

O'Rourke says this is a hard year, and we're coming into some turbulent waters. Maybe we should be looking at private funding/donations for art. Caron says we've fallen behind on public art, and we need to step up.

Caton says art is equity, look at the rainbow crosswalk. We need more of it in the city.

Downer asks if there's a policy about development providing funding for public art. Clack-

Bush says public art policy is only for City-owned assets.

Busuttill says this item is really hard, we are heading into stormy times and we need to focus. Also, not all public art is distributed equally; the west end is a "wasteland".

Public art motion fails 4-9 (Allt, Klassen, Downer and Caron approve)

Klassen/Goller move this one:

## **Budget Amendment – 8**



### **Councillor Klassen**

1. That Council amend the 2025 budget update by increasing the operating budget by \$100,000 in 2025 funded by the tax levy, to provide a resource to expand sponsorship and identify potential corporate partnerships, and that Council directs staff to provide an information report that outlines the progress from this investment by the end of 2025.

Klassen says that she knows that they have people working on sponsorships, and this is looking at other opportunities. Many cities promote public art through sponsorship and offer naming rights. City has one person in place and worked with staff on this motion.



Richardson asks whether this is enough. Clack-Bush says that they have to be cautious because they don't want to cannibalise other work like River Run, or the South End Community Centre naming strategy. This seems fit for one-time funding.

Goller asks if this can intersect with the bicentennial. Clack-Bush says it could, but that will depend on the size and scope of whatever they end up planning for the bicentennial.

O'Rourke asks if they can add this from the tax operating contingency? Clack-Bush says that's a good idea, not sure about bringing someone on till they're sure that they work they do can cover their own salary even, or till they're sure there's opportunity out there.

CAO Baker says the tax operating reserve is pretty low all things considered right now, so there's that to think about.

Amendment: "Up to" \$100k out of the tax operating contingency reserve. Moved by O'Rourke/Richardson. O'Dwyer says that their original idea was to fund with taxes and the reverse it with generated revenue

## **Budget Amendment – 8**



### **Councillor O'Rourke Amendment**

1. To allocate up to \$100,000 from the Tax Operating Contingency reserve to provide a resource to expand sponsorship and identify potential corporate partnerships, and that Council directs staff to provide an information report that outlines the progress from this investment by the end of 2025.

Guthrie says that he believes that they can get some corporate sponsors. Other cities have teams bringing in millions and Guelph needs to get in the game. Would like staff to bring back information report about making this full-time FTE.

Allt says he's been concerned about the reserves for a while, this seems like a "perilous use" of the reserve and were warned about going back for more.

Downer says she won't support it for that reason, like the hospital levy.

Vote 7-6 (Goller, Allt, Busutill, Caton, Billings, Downer vote against)

## Budget Amendment – 8.1 Amendment



### Councillor O'Rourke

- 1. To allocate up to \$100,000 from the Tax Operating Contingency reserve to provide a resource to expand** sponsorship and identify potential corporate partnerships, and that Council directs staff to provide an information report that outlines the progress from this investment by the end of 2025.

On the amended motion passes 11-2 (Allt, Busuttil against)

Caron/Gibson motion. No 2025 impact here.

## Budget Amendment – 9



### Councillor Caron

1. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2026 operating budget by \$300,000 for Guelph's bi-centennial, funded by the tax levy through the 2026 budget update.
2. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2027 operating budget by \$200,000 for Guelph's bi-centennial, funded by the tax levy through the 2027 budget update.
3. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor decreases the tax levy in 2028 by \$500,000.

Caron says this is about economic development. This lets City leverage big money to the community \*and\* do meaningful reconciliation work. Need to treat this as seed money and when looking at other bicentennials this still puts us on a backfoot.

Gibson says he's been turned around on this. It is a matter of community pride and all the 150th stuff is still hanging around, so let's put some elbow grease into it.

Goller asks about sponsorship opportunities. Clack-Bush says that the working group will be looking at how to active community interest and sponsorship will be a part of that.

O'Rourke asks about wording in clause #3, that it should read reducing the "operating budget" not "tax levy". Staff says that's right. O'Rourke/Caron move the amendment to change the wording and it's approved.

## Budget Amendment – 9

### Councillor O'Rourke Amendment

1. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2026 operating budget by \$300,000 for Guelph's bi-centennial, funded by the tax levy through the 2026 budget update.
2. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor considers increasing the 2027 operating budget by \$200,000 for Guelph's bi-centennial, funded by the tax levy through the 2027 budget update.
3. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor decreases the operating budget in 2028 by \$500,000, reducing the tax levy.

O'Rourke asks if the MAT can offset any of this. Clack-Bush says that there may be economic benefit, it is, essentially, a community celebration.

O'Rourke: Even if had a homecoming day!?

Clack-Bush: We'll have to wait and see what's planned.

Motion passes unanimously.

That's it for the amendments. Where we stand:

3.66% tax levy increase for the City side

6.08% total increase to be confirmed in January once local board budgets are approved.

5 minute break and we will wrap things up!



Back to business.

Guthrie says next motion is the shortening of the 30-day amendment period. Guthrie says he will NOT veto anything. He respects the amendment process, but this needs to be passed.

Gibson/Allt move and it's approved.

## Shortening the 30-Day Budget Amendment Period



1. That the 30-day budget amendment period prescribed in Ontario Regulation 530/22 Section 7 (3) be shortened and the final day for amendments be November 27th, 2024.

Directions. This one about Culture plan moved by Downer/Caron as a response to the additional funding put back into the budget to cost the plan.

## Additional Motion – 1 Councillor Downer



1. That staff be directed to report back on the progress of the Culture Plan and implementation funding through an Information Report in September 2025.

Motion approved.

Next: Reporting on outcomes of master plans through the capital budget. Downer moves. Notes that the changes to master plan been altered b/c of fully funded cap. budget. Need to see those impacts.

## Additional Motion – 2 Councillor Downer



1. That staff be directed to report back through an information report on what outcomes are expected to be achieved in the 10-year capital budget and forecast period for each of the Council approved master plans and strategies based on the 2025 budget update.

Allt asks about any comments from Baker, and she says she's got no concerns.

Motion approved unanimously.

**2025 Draft Budget Update Companion  
Report - Council Budget Decisions - 2024-  
457**



1. That the 2025-2027 rates fees and charges be readopted, in accordance with the adopted 2025 budget, and subject to any amendments in budget confirmation years 2026 and 2027.
2. That the Development Applications Fee By-law be amended to reflect the changes in Attachment-1.
3. That in accordance with the General Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy, total transfers to and from reserves and reserve funds for 2025 are approved.
4. That a one-time transfer from the Library Capital reserve fund (#157) to the Infrastructure Renewal reserve fund (#150) to properly align funding and expenditures for Baker District debt servicing costs is approved.

**2025 Draft Budget Update Companion  
Report - Council Budget Decisions - 2024-  
457**



5. That Appendix A of the General Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy be amended to reflect the creation of a Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) reserve fund (#304) and a Building Faster Fund (BFF) reserve fund (#306) in accordance with the terms and authority identified in the 2024-457 2025 Draft Budget Update Companion Report – Council Budget Decisions report, dated October 30, 2024.
6. That Council acknowledges the City's reserve strategy deployed in the 2025 budget update results in operating contingency reserve balances that continue to be below approved targets, and that staff continue to be directed to replenish these reserves as a first priority through the allocation of year-end surplus until such point that they reach a minimum of 75 per cent of target over the multi-year budget period.
7. That Council acknowledges that the 10-year capital budget and forecast included in the 2025 budget update will significantly draw down the City's capital reserve funds and rely on inter-reserve fund borrowing, and that this is expected to result in balances below policy targets at times during the budget and forecast period.

## **2025 Draft Budget Update Companion Report - Council Budget Decisions - 2024- 457**



8. That Council acknowledges that the 10-year capital budget and forecast included in the 2025 budget update will be supported by debt financing at the same level as the debt strategy proposed in the 2024-2027 multi-year budget, and that the projected debt levels are in excess of the credit rating agency criterion, which will likely impact the City's future credit rating.
9. That given the sustained increase in the size of the capital budget and forecast, the projected drawdown of reserve funds and increased reliance on debt, staff be directed to undertake a sustainability analysis on the overall level of tax supported capital funding, and report back to Council with any recommendations prior to the next multi-year budget cycle (2028 – 2031).
10. That staff be directed to assess the long-term capital needs of the water and wastewater services, and the impact on customers of adjusting utility rates between the services to achieve a balanced capital reserve fund forecast for each service; and that proposed adjustments resulting from this assessment are presented as part of the 2026 budget confirmation process.

Motions approved unanimously.

Allt/Goller move this one and it's approved.

## **Budget Impacts per Ontario Regulation 284- 09 and Budget – Public Sector Accounting Standards Reconciliation 2025 - 2024-490**



1. That the budget impacts per Ontario Regulation 284-09 and budget - Public Sector Accounting Standards Reconciliation for the 2025 budget be approved.

Gibson says it's never personal and appreciates everyone's input. Wants to note that we started at 10% and appreciates the relief from the mayor and staff, this is an achievement based on the pressures we're all facing. Also praises 10-year fully-funded capital budget.

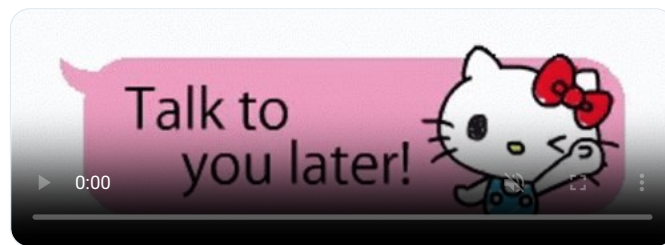
Allt says he appreciates Gibson's comments, but he still has concerns for reserves and at some point they will have to pay those back. Need to be aware of potential surprises and rainy days from "another level of government."

Guthrie says thank you to staff, this is probably a record budget length. The honing of the process has been better year-over-year. Thanks to senior staff and notes that the new CAO comes from finance. He thanks the public for their input.

Guthrie: This is higher than he wanted but high value too. Struck a very good balance by not having 10% or higher this year, but they've had impact on transit, safety, culture, and many areas. "I think we've landed in a good, balanced place."

Guthrie thanks council too because they are the conduit to their communities.

So that's a wrap for this meeting!



@threadreaderapp unroll please

...