

General Government Services – Council Services

Service Description

Essex County Council is comprised of the Mayors and Deputy Mayors of the seven (7) member municipalities. County Council is responsible for establishing the policies governing the operations of the County of Essex.

Prior Year Performance

Projected results of operations for 2018 reveal an under expenditure of \$11,620. Savings were experienced in indemnities as there were fewer Committee/Board meetings towards the end of the term of Council and conference expenditures were lower than anticipated.

Proposed Budget – Current Year

The proposed budget for 2019 reflects an increase of 7 % percent or \$28,170. Legislative changes to the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act requiring the appointment of an Integrity Commission and expanding the scope of that role has resulted in an increased allocation for meeting expenses. Integrity Commissioner services, at an hourly rate, may be utilized by members of Council on a regular basis, as a resource for questions related to Conflict of Interest and Council Code of Conduct matters. Additional meeting expenditures include the allocation of \$5,000 to implement video streaming of County Council meetings to the web. Grant funding received for the provision of Closed Captioning of Council meeting live broadcasts by Your TV has been discontinued, however the service is proposed to continue as an accessibility initiative.

Additional increases to the budget relate to an anticipated increase in County Council salaries and meeting per diems. In accordance with Section 25 of Procedure By-law 41-2018, the formula based salaries and meeting stipends for members of County Council, are to be recalculated for December 1, 2018 to December 1, 2020. The formula, however, is based on Council salary information from the 7 lower tier municipalities. Due to the Canada Revenue Agency elimination of the one third tax free allowance for elected officials, the Council salaries are being reviewed by the lower tier municipalities and it is anticipated that many will opt to adjust Council salaries to compensate for the change to the taxable income rules.

Savings in the 2019 budget are primarily due to non-recurring expenses related to the final year of Council (2018), including expenditures such as the Warden's Banquet and Election.

There has been a re-classification of Communication related expenses from Council Services to Administration and a centralization of advertising expenses, also previously allocated in the Council Services budget.