

Public Meeting – 2017 Budget
Merrickville Community Centre
January 16, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Question	Answer
Where is the revenue from the solar panels indicated in the budget?	This is placed under administration. \$24,000 has been projected for 2017.
What happens when we have an emergency, such as a flood? Where does that money come from?	Under a state of emergency (which may only be put into effect by the Mayor), our procurement policy does not apply. The money can come out of reserves or be borrowed. However, we can recover those costs from the Province.
Is the municipality anticipating emergencies and preparing for such events?	Yes, we are. We have an Emergency Management Plan in place which is updated annually. Please see our Emergency Response Plan at https://www.merrickville-wolford.ca/images/Emergency_Response_Plan_2016 - Dec 19 2016.pdf
Is there a line in the budget for reforestation? This will be a serious problem in the future due to Emerald Borer disease affecting Ash trees as it spreads throughout the province.	Yes, we currently have \$5,000 budgeted for tree removal and \$500 for replanting. This is not enough.
As the strategic plan has come in too late to influence the budget, what is the mechanism for budgeting for it?	\$25,000 has been earmarked for the strategic plan initiatives. Council has the authority and final say on how this money is spent and on which initiatives to support.
Has the municipality taken advantage of every grant opportunity?	No, but we will be. There was a point when the municipality was broken and many opportunities were overlooked. The municipal staff in place now will be ensuring a cohesive team effort in applying for grants.
Would you like help? There may be people in the community with experience in filling out grant applications, researching grants, etc.	Absolutely! Should anyone from the community wish to assist, please contact the municipal office.
There are no cleanup passes for the landfill being issued going forward. What does this mean?	In previous years, 2 passes were issued per household but it was hard to provide this free service while working towards a sustainable landfill. We are treating the landfill as a commercial operation moving forward.
What happens to the budget when the school board and County rates come in?	The budget is as adopted by Council. The additional rates will then provide the total rate.
Why is Merrickville-Wolford's tax rate higher than other municipalities?	Because the total assessment value of the properties in Merrickville-Wolford is much lower than neighbouring municipalities, our rate is higher. Our tax rate is higher because we are a small municipality with a small assessment base providing services such as roads, fire services, policing, recreation, library, etc.
What is the municipality doing to shift the tax burden from residents to commercial and industrial properties?	Merrickville-Wolford is working to grow the commercial and industrial sector. In fact, this is reflected in the strategic plan as one of the Municipality's priorities.

Is the work budgeted for on Drummond/Lewis/Brock Streets only going forward if the grant application is approved?	Yes.
If we do not receive the grant, can the money go towards doing any one of those streets?	Council may decide where they would like to allocate the money.
Where are we planning to locate a commercial sector?	Merrickville's downtown is our commercial sector, however, we could look at an industrial/business park in the future.
Are most people in the village on water and sewer?	Approximately 300 households are using the system. Some use water only and are not on the sewer system.
Is there still time to make changes to the budget?	Yes, the budget is in draft form only at this time and Council has yet to approve it.
Why are we paying off the water treatment plant in 5 years? If we stretched it to 15 years it would be less of a burden on users.	We are not paying off the plant in five years. In fact, the plant will be fully paid for in 2044. The 10% increase per year on water and sewage rates is only to get the plant to no longer be running in an operating deficit. We are currently using our reserves to make up the difference between the user fees collected and the actual operational costs.
I see you have budgeted for \$285,000 to repave roads. Have you looked into using recycled pavement as an option?	The Recycled Asphalt (RAP) would not provide the longevity of hot mix asphalt. Recycled asphalt does not stand up to heavy loads, would break apart and require constant maintenance.
Does the portion of the budget for signage include signs near the 401 and signs recommended by the parking committee?	All of the recommendations for signage by the parking committee are included in the budget. Other signs included information signs and 401 signs in 2016.
What is the Village doing about strategic sourcing and procurement?	We have a procurement policy that must be followed. We are not in the private sector, so we are not allowed to go to an auction, for example, to look for the cheapest price. Wherever we can find cost savings, however, we make sure to take advantage of them. We will look into being more active in bundling purchases with the county as well as other municipalities to get better pricing.
Why are you only putting in 2 park benches as it is Canada 150 this year and the Village should look its best?	We would like to do more should we have the money. The Chamber of Commerce is also looking at ways to beautify the Village.
The Village is not accessible for public washrooms. Is the municipality looking into this?	Yes. Council has directed staff to research non-new infrastructure options. There have also been discussions with Parks Canada.