



**Township of Howick  
Special Council Minutes  
Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.  
2026 Municipal Budget – Draft #2**

**1. Call to Order**

Reeve Harding called the Special Council Meeting to order at 8:23 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

**2. Acceptance of Agenda**

**Moved by: Councillor Rognvaldson**

**Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson**

That Council of the Township of Howick accept the Agenda for the January 27, 2026 Special Council Budget Meeting, as presented.

**Carried.**

**3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

None Declared.

**4. Budget Presentation and Discussion**

The purpose of this meeting is for Council to provide direction to staff on the second draft of the 2026 municipal budget. Treasurer Amy Van Meeteren will present the draft budget, with each Department Head presenting their department's capital and operating budgets for Council's consideration.

**4.1 FIN-2026-04, 2026 Municipal Budget – Draft #2**

Reeve Harding called upon Treasurer Amy Van Meeteren to present the second draft of the 2026 Municipal Budget.

Changes made to Draft #2 of the 2026 Budget:

- Reallocating the cost of the generator transfer switches to come out of the recreation reserves.
- Fire Department added an additional \$6,000.00 to Fire Department Building Upgrades Capital for additional gear racking.
- Fire Department included an additional \$9,000.00 in accessories for the F150 that wasn't spent in 2025.
- Landfill upgrade expenses for 2026 in the amount of \$71,000.00 to come from landfill reserves.
- \$600.00 was added to Fire Department wages.
- \$800.00 was added to 2-9 (the Fire Department's 2011 Ford E-350) to cover the cost of the running boards that have been installed.

- \$19,500.00 was added to By-Law Enforcement revenue for contracting out the new full-time by-law enforcement officer to North Huron based on 1 day/week.
- The capital purchase of a utility trailer for the recreation department has increased from \$3,200.00 to \$4,000.00 for the purchase of the Fire Department's utility trailer.
- Fire Department donations increased to \$12,000.00 to be used to purchase the proposed enclosed trailer for the UTV.
- Council donations to Parks and Halls increased to cover the cost of both garbage bag tags and recycling tipping fee.

Draft #2 requires just over 5.1 million is to be raised through taxation and the proposed tax rate increase over 2025 is 6.031 % plus a 2% capital infrastructure levy.

#### **4.2 Questions/Comments from Council**

Staff pointed out that Majority of the capital projects are being pulled from reserves and not funded through taxation, therefore they currently aren't increasing the proposed tax rate increase.

In response to questions from Council, staff clarified that the boom mower is to cut saplings and overgrowth in the ditches to the fencelines and the flail mower is for roadside grass cutting.

Council requested the cost for Recreation to complete all grass cutting duties that were formerly contracted out. The Recreation and Facilities Manager estimated that 2025 costs we approximately \$12 000.00. Treasurer Van Meeteren pointed out that this number is unverified, no final calculation has been completed.

Council asked staff to investigate whether they could decrease the proposed tax rate increase to the same as 2025, which was 7.439%. Draft #2 is currently sitting at an 8.031% increase.

A member of Council asked whether Gough Road would be paved after its rebuilding was completed in 2024. Staff expressed that there are currently no plans for Gough Road to be paved. The cost to pave three country blocks, requiring two lifts of asphalt is approximately \$500,000.00 per block. How does the Township justify new pavement jobs when roads that are already paved are not being adequately maintained?

In response to a question from Council, Staff clarified that 1% of the 2026 budget is approximately \$47,000.

There was brief discussion around pulling an additional \$47,000.00 from reserves to bring the tax rate down, but this just depletes reserves that are required for future equipment or infrastructure projects.

Council discussed operating for a year with the current by-law officer and newly implemented administration help to see what progress is made. Could the Building Department vehicle be shared instead of purchasing a used vehicle for a By-law Enforcement Officer?

Members of the public expressed concern regarding unknown expenditures associated with the proposed new daycare facility. Will the ongoing costs be sustainable for the Township? Staff pointed out that the 2026 budget only reflects one staff member, a supervisor of the facility.

Members of the public suggested hosting a public information meeting for the public to gain insight into the proposed daycare facility project. Some residents have concerns around the financial impact the daycare will have on the residents of Howick and the increase to the taxes once the daycare facility is up and running. The public would like to see the projection of the annual operating costs associated with running the daycare facility before a final decision is made to build it.

Direction was provided to staff for the Senior Management Team to meet to review Draft #2 with the goal of matching 2025's tax rate increase of 7.439% or less.

#### **4.3 Questions/Comments from Public**

### **5. Adjournment**

**Moved by: Councillor Grimes**  
**Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson**

That the Council of the Township of Howick adjourn the January 27, 2026 Special Council meeting at 9:57p.m. and reconvene into the Regular Council meeting.

**Carried.**

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**Reeve, Doug Harding**

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**CAO/Clerk Caitlin Gillis**