



United Counties of
Leeds and Grenville
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2020

The highlights of the regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council Meeting held on Thursday, January 23rd and a special Committee of the Whole meeting are listed below.

Major road projects this year will include paved shoulders: Counties Council has unanimously endorsed paved shoulders on all major capital road projects beginning this year.

The Counties Asset Management Plan will also be updated to include paved shoulders on major capital road projects. Over the last few years, there have been several requests for paved shoulders from the public, elected officials, and other stakeholders.

Paved shoulders have recently been included for major capital projects on County Road 2 and County Road 10. Counties Council has asked staff to report back on the implications of paved shoulders in order to provide a consistent approach to future projects and development of a policy.

A report from Public Works noted the department will continue to monitor the benefits of paved shoulders, including increased safety, financial, economic development, and active transportation benefits. A new policy is being developed and should be final by spring or early summer. Paved shoulders are 1.5-metres in width. For more information, contact Counties Director of Public Works Arup Mukherjee at 613-342-3840, ext. 2412.

Funding for a review of regional fire services: Counties Council has asked staff to proceed with a Request For Proposal (RFP) for a regional fire services review after receiving Municipal Modernization Program funding from the Province.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is providing up to \$120,000 toward the joint project for the cost of an independent third-party reviewer to deliver a final report

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by June 30, 2020. Minister Steve Clark announced the funding in a January 20th letter sent to the Counties and all Leeds Grenville member and separated municipalities.

The intent is to ensure all local fire departments and fire chiefs are involved and consulted. The City of Brockville, and Towns of Gananoque and Prescott, will be asked if they wish to be part of the review. There is no cost if consulting fees are under \$120,000.

Investigating a strategic Leeds Grenville fire service, including a Counties-wide fire service, was discussed in 2018. At that time, a consultant was hired and a CAOs' workshop was held involving 10 member municipalities. There was a consensus on completing a collective Community Risk Assessment and Professional Qualifications and Standards Assessments, both required by legislation, transparent communications between stakeholders, and a Services and Program Review. A Services and Program Review could identify opportunities to improve efficiencies and effectiveness. For more information, contact CAO Andy Brown at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

Budget recommended by Committee of Whole: The Committee of the Whole has recommended the approval of the 2020 budget. The levy requirement is increasing \$1,268,141, but due to assessment growth and the phase-in of assessment increases, this will translate into a 0.33% tax rate decrease.

The median value of a residential home this year is \$221,000, with a Counties tax total of \$817. In 2019, the median home value was \$218,250 with a tax level of \$809. Council is expected to pass the budget at the next council meeting on February 19. For more information, contact Treasurer Pat Huffman at 613-342-3840, ext. 2468.

Upcoming meetings: The Committee of the Whole meeting is on Tuesday, February 4th and the Joint Services Committee Wednesday, February 5th. The February Council meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 20th has been rescheduled to Wednesday, February 19th. All regular meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the Council Chambers at 25 Central Avenue, Brockville. For more information, contact County Clerk Lesley Todd at 613-342-3840, ext. 2454.

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Media inquiries:

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