

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 20, 2022

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Jeff Letourneau, Director Corporate Services

SUBJECT: 2023 Budget Schedule and Process

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend Council approve the 2023 budget schedule and process as presented.

BACKGROUND:

The annual budget process usually commences at the Senior Staff level in July of the preceding budget year. The draft budget is then presented by the Treasurer and Senior Staff in a series of meetings to Council and then presented to the public at a special meeting before final adoption. The budget timeline from first presentation to Council is typically in October of the preceding budget year with final adoption between December of the preceding budget year and February of the current budget year. The Municipality has also been striving to increase opportunities for public consultation within the budget process.

DISCUSSION:

In a non-election year, it is ideal if the budget can be passed by Council in December of the preceding year to allow tenders to be issued early in the new year to obtain best pricing and to provide a workplan for Staff for the upcoming year. Previously used budget timelines would rarely result in budget approval in December. In years past, the Municipality held public meetings following consultation with Council. With the Christmas schedules and notice provisions, it is at times difficult to firm up dates for the public meeting in December, which further delayed the final approval of the budget.

As required by the Municipal Act, all budget meetings are open to the public, however the Municipal Act does not stipulate that Municipalities must hold public meetings. Historically, the Municipality only relied on the public meeting to receive input and comments from residents. At this stage of the process, the budget is usually balanced and near final completion and the number of comments received is low.

In an effort to achieve greater community input and engagement into the municipal budget, staff have explored an alternative budget timeline with a greater window for meaningful community engagement. In addition, the community engagement strategy for the budget will also include educational pieces to help residents better understand how their tax dollars are being spent, legislative requirements and the budget decision making process.

The proposed schedule below takes into consideration that this is an election year, and as such, review and approval dates for the budget are pushed back in order to accommodate the election process and new Council orientation. In a non-election year, the process would target budget approval by Council in December.

The following chart outlines a proposed schedule and process for the 2023 operating and capital budget:

Schedule	Time	Purpose
Staff budget development	October - December	Staff to develop the draft operating and capital budget in alignment with the strategic plan and other long range plans.
Bi-Weekly budget spotlights issued by the Municipality	Bi-Weekly from early November, 2022 to approval of the budget	On a bi- weekly basis the Municipality will issue informational and background pieces that highlight key components of the budget, the process, spending, legislative requirements and more. We will also ensure to include information on upcoming engagement opportunities. These information pieces will be published on the municipal website, Facebook and the local newspaper.
Tuesday, December 13, 2022	TBD	Tabling of draft operating and capital budget at a special Committee of the Whole meeting by Director Corporate Services/Treasurer
Tuesday, January 10, 2023	9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Senior Staff to make presentations to Committee of the Whole on their draft operating and capital budgets

Thursday January 12, 2023	9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Senior Staff to complete presentations to Committee of the Whole. Committee of the Whole to provide direction and identify projects or areas that they would like public feedback on.
Public Engagement	January 20 to February 10, 2023	A public survey will be circulated requesting input on aspects of the budget. Printed copies of the survey will also be made available at municipal buildings.
Tuesday, February 28, 2023	6 p.m.	Director Corp Services/ Treasurer to present results of the survey feedback and finalize the budget document with Committee of the Whole
Tuesday, March 14, 2023	6 p.m.	Council to approve the 2023 budget

OPTIONS:

- 1) Approve the schedule as presented
- 2) Propose amendments or alternatives

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications.

SUMMARY:

The proposed budget schedule and process allows for more public engagement and feedback to provide Council with additional input prior to approving the final 2023 budget. Meaningful community engagement is a powerful tool for both Council and Staff to utilize to not only communicate with residents but to also help inform key municipal decisions. It will also empower members of the community to feel as though their input has value and has been considered by members of Council. The proposed budget process allows members of the public to provide input prior to final approval while also ensuring the Members of Council have time to review materials and pose questions to Staff. The process above is for an election year. In a non-election year, the process would be moved up to target budget approval in December.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jeff Letourneau,
Director Corporate Services

Reviewed by:

Ken Kelly,
CAO