

NEWS LOCAL

City dedicates \$52 M to capital budget

By Elaine Della-Mattia, Sault Star Monday, December 4, 2017 10:55:58 EST PM



City council passed a capital budget Monday of just more than \$52 million.

The budget includes an array or road work, planning projects, addition to transit and public works fleet and equipment and commun service projects, among other things.

Most directly affected by the public is capital road reconstruction projects that will take place across Sault Ste. Marie next year.

Capital road reconstruction projects for 2018 will include Bruce Street from Queen to Wellington; Black Road from Second to Third Line, Bay Street from Andrew to Pim Street and the widening of Black Road from McNabb Street to Second Line if connecting link funding is received.

Other projects include the second phase of the McNabb/Pim streets sewer project and the Fort Creek Aqueduct project.

City staff recommended that the Simpson Street reconstruction project be delayed one year in order to allow the streetscaping of Bruce and the reconstruction of Bay Street.

That move was questioned by Ward 2 Coun. Susan Myers who noted that Simpson Street is 100 years old and residents are concerned that the underground services are aging and in jeopardy because of a new subdivision built adjacent to the street.

Director of Engineering Don Elliott said there is not enough money in the budget to complete all three projects and it is recommender that the Simpson Street project be delayed one year.

The asphalt on Bay Street is in very poor shape, he said, and city crews may be forced to close off lanes on the main artery if the work isn't done this year, he said.

Elliott assured city council that the engineering work for all three projects is moving forward and the Bay Street project will be dependent on the results of a traffic study currently underway.

Ward 3 Coun. Matthew Shoemaker recommended that the city defer the purchase of an ice resurfacer (zamboni) this year.

While the zamboni's that are used in the city's arena facilities range in age from 21 years to one year old, staff agreed the spending could be deferred one more year but warned the equipment was coming to the end of its useful life.

Council agreed to the suggestion defer the replacement purchase of a zamboni at the cost of \$112,000. That money will be saved from the capital from current budget and ultimately the levy.

Contrary to staff's recommendation, instead of increasing that budget by \$175,000, the budget will only increase \$62,500 this year. The increase was designed to help return the \$300,000 taken from the budget in 2017 to help reduce the levy.

The capital from current budget will also be used to update or purchase a number of other items for city buildings, including CO monitors for rinks, hands free radios for transit services, a new bus, a fire dispatch upgrading system, two plow trucks for the community services division, a corporate data server and electric voting system for council meetings.

A budget for the city's asset management plan of \$1.84 million will also be used for a number of repairs including transit capital repairs, museum brickwork, fire boilers, fire station brick work, police electrical upgrades, PWT boilers and the civic centre membrane/concrete waterproofing.

The capital budget also asks council to look ahead to establish long-term debt for the replacement of the McMeeken Centre.

While the results of an ice time utilization study has not yet been completed, deputy CAO of community and enterprise services Tor Vair said the draft report suggests the arena should be replaced, and a twin pad facility could be considered.

The report to council states that funding would need to be obtained from other sources and it would be expected that servicing any debt for a new facility would be added to the tax levy in the future.

The capital budget was approved in a 12-1 recorded vote. The lone opponent was Ward 6 Coun. Ozzie Grandinetti.

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