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## 2023 Draft Operating and Capital Budget – Public Comments

	Individual/ Organization	Topic / Theme	Comments
1.	Don Furniss (MRA)	Capital Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inherited much infrastructure at amalgamation; needs to be address</li> <li>• Need to hold off on major investments until major spending is done until comprehensive study is completed; unused facilities need to be sold</li> <li>• Proposed studies on Burgess Dam should be terminated; suggest terminating lease and exit water management plan; work with MNRF and sell water rights to SREL and demolish dam</li> <li>• No one asked to see historical details on capital spending; wants to see status of 2021 and 2022 projects (completed, in progress, postponed, cancelled) – “gobsmacked” approval in principle given for \$11M</li> <li>• 6% inflation factor is unrealistic based on BofC projections; huge errors in forecasting models – keep constant dollar projections as in the past</li> <li>• Fix and patch vs renovation; higher costs overall</li> <li>• Beaumaris bridge; additional work needed and not budgeted</li> </ul>
2.	Doug Bryden (MRA)	Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserve and historical spending; 2014 consumed 16 cents; 2020 is 20 cents and 2022 is 22 cents; 10 year trend is disturbing</li> <li>• Alarm that inadequate unrestricted reserves to maintain infrastructure and cushion to handle catastrophe; current taxpayers should pay for current services</li> <li>• 2017 and 2018 tax levy was increased to bolster reserves for two years; tax rates have been suppressed recently and reserve balances sit below what province deems appropriate</li> <li>• Actual year end reserves for 2021, 2022 details for reserves</li> <li>• Forecasting precision needs to be improved; frustration by changing estimates from year to year</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumed a 6% inflation is unrealistic; minimal value beyond 3 years and subject to huge errors</li> <li>• Concern with direction to reduce contributions to reserves; reduce costs by eliminating cost,; not deferring projects</li> </ul>
3.	Steve Rohacek (MLA)	Operating and Capital Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall supportive; new staff positions for septic and bylaw</li> <li>• Core asset management plan; unclear if linked; transportation master plan and linkages to capital plan is unclear</li> <li>• Funding from reserves for road capital is unlikely to be sustainable; how will capital be financed and whether debt will manage tax increases</li> </ul>
4.	Norah Fountain (MLCC)	Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting economy; Key partner for less than 0.1% of tax levy</li> <li>• We put money for social needs; business networking event</li> <li>• Presentation to discuss value proposition and services for Township</li> </ul>
5.	Jim Hedrich (MLCC)	Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking to support the MLCC request; supplier to do so much for so little</li> <li>• Receive less than other Chamber organizations receive from other municipalities</li> <li>• We have expenses; funding needed to operate</li> </ul>
6.	Randy Heyd (MLCC)	Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fee for service provider for the Township</li> <li>• Decided to move forward with investment in the future - \$60,000 “hard costs”</li> <li>• Ahead of schedule on deliverables</li> </ul>
7.	Viktoria Hama (MLCC)	Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial information requested has been provided for 2021</li> <li>• Some provincial grants not received in 2021; elected amongst Ontario CCs for services during pandemic</li> <li>• Township economy benefits from our work</li> <li>• 2023 funding undetermined; reliance on wage grants and Township funding to support initiatives</li> <li>• Request including annual budget increases in funding each year</li> </ul>
8.	Geoff Ross	Community centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't like tax increases; don't like erosion of services even more</li> <li>• Inflation exists; an increase below inflation means something is lost, usually services</li> <li>• Community halls are bedrock of small communities and residents; reduce quality of life</li> </ul>
9.	Donelda Hayes	Roads / Recreation (Pickleball) / Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most significant report for Council</li> <li>• Pickleball can be played on a tennis court; not other way around – where will it go?</li> <li>• New Parks and Rec position; community centre programs – did not go well (RN and AE)</li> <li>• Roads – very challenging; budget needs to reflect this priority</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities are hurting; people need to make hard choices – hold off looking to the future</li> </ul>
10.	Graham Hall	Recreation (Pickleball)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pickleball is the greatest sport ever; 45% growth</li> <li>• 1 million players; delays in getting on the courts; huge demand</li> <li>• Increased demand for court time; need to build courts</li> </ul>
11.	Patrick Anderson	Recreation (Pickleball)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of game; growth over tennis</li> <li>• Currently get 9 hours at each arena each week (Bala, Port Carling)</li> <li>• Need to paint lines; establish courts in the municipality</li> </ul>
12.	Sandra Morris	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment; protection of wetlands</li> <li>• Part of Council initiatives should include development of an environmental plan</li> <li>• Work will help direct future policies and bylaws to protect the environment</li> </ul>
13	Saley Lawton	Goose Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision to eliminate goose patrol in Windermere; cancellation last year was “awful”</li> <li>• Affects water quality; township docks and beaches are affected</li> <li>• Well used beaches are impacted; must reinstate to make beaches usable</li> <li>• Negative impact on tourism</li> </ul>
14	Tom Grajnar (MRA)	Operating Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical perspective; 2015 were 9.25M, 2019 up 37% in 2019, up 63% in 2023 over 2015; all during low inflation (some months were deflationary)</li> <li>• Inflation is currently trending downward; expense increases have outpaced CPI since 2014 with minor service level change</li> <li>• Wages and benefits – 55% of total expenses in 2015; 52% in 2019; now 62% in 2023</li> <li>• On-going financial impacts of new positions; never seen a “right-sizing” of government departments</li> <li>• High inflation is temporary; salary adjustment not comparable to other governments or private industry</li> <li>• Recommend independent review by consultant on staffing levels;</li> <li>• Pleased to see insurance savings; maintain risk management efforts</li> <li>• \$25,000 to paint railroad bridge; not a capital expense; should be paid for out of SREL funds for Bala; design or mural should be considered</li> </ul>
15	James Stanbury	Community centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support previous comments on community halls and goose patrol</li> <li>• Hall member at Raymond; disappointed Hall Boards don’t have input on budget – e.g. input on new renovation excludes showers as warming centre; denied request for notice board</li> <li>• Make contributions to the community through clubs (e.g. Windermere Lions Club)</li> <li>• Requesting full exemption from fees for community centres for any service groups</li> </ul>

