



October 31, 2023

Township of Muskoka Lakes
1 Bailey Street, P.O. Box 129
Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0

Attention: Chair Susan Mazan and Members of General and Finance Committee

Dear Chair Susan Mazan and Members of General and Finance Committee:

Re: MLA Comments on 2024 Draft Operating and Capital Budget and Forecast

The Muskoka Lakes Association (the “MLA”) is writing to offer its comments on the 2024 Draft Operating and Capital Budget and Forecast which will be discussed at the November 1, 2023 special meeting of the General/Finance Committee.

The MLA would like to thank the Township for the increased transparency in this year’s draft Capital Budget and would encourage the Township to continue to enhance transparency levels.

As the MLA noted in its delegation at the September 7th meeting on the guidelines for the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget, we continue to be concerned with the level of deferred maintenance and future capital spending facing the Township.

The draft 2024 Capital Plan which increases the 10 year forecasted capital needs from September’s \$100 M to \$121 M also adds to the Township’s existing deferred capital of \$24 M as budgeted 2024 road spending falls \$1.3 M short of the amount needed to maintain the roads in good repair per the 2022 core infrastructure asset management plan.

We appreciate and support the Township’s plans to continue the development of an integrated capital plan once the Capital Service Level study is completed in 2024 and encourage the Township to link the plan to how it will be funded and financed. In light of the dramatically increasing tax levies forecasted over the next ten years to support existing infrastructure maintenance in the Draft 2024 Capital Plan, it appears that some difficult decisions will need to be made.

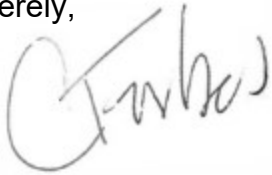
The MLA is very supportive of the addition of resources to support the septic re-inspection program that will be fully recovered through fees for the program in the 2024 Draft Operating budget.

We are also very supportive of the addition of a contract position for the provision of GIS services focused on further mapping for Site Plan and Septic re-inspection layers as well as a winter patrol app. The enhanced tracking of assets and programs this will enable should increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of Township operations.

Lastly, we note that the levy increase of 8.3% in the 2024 Draft budget, assuming that the service level enhancements are approved and before any offset from MPAC assessment growth, is forecast to increase by a further 10.5% in 2025 and a further 9.5% in 2026. Consideration could be given to smoothing the increases further over these three years.

On behalf of the Muskoka Lakes Association, we would like to thank Council for this opportunity to provide our comments on the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and Forecast.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cindy Forbes", written over a light blue circular stamp or watermark.

Cindy Forbes
Second Vice President, Muskoka Lakes Association

Cc: Mark Donaldson and Derrick Hammond