



## Staff Report

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**Report To:** Council  
**Report From:** Michele Harris, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Meeting Date:** October 22, 2024  
**Subject:** 2025 – Additional Items for Budget Consideration

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### Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of staff report '2025 – Additional Items for Budget Consideration', Council:

1. provides direction to staff on additional items to be brought forward for consideration as part 2025 budget deliberations;
2. directs staff to prepare fulsome budget estimates and business cases for the recommended additional items that will be brought forward for consideration during 2025 budget deliberations.

### Highlights:

- On October 22, 2024, the preliminary 2025 West Grey budget (operational) for maintaining current service levels, will be presented to Council.
- The draft West Grey capital budget will be brought forward for Council consideration and deliberation at the November 12, 2024, budget meeting.
- Additional items brought forward in this report are items that: 1) have been identified in the Municipality's Strategic Plan that have budget implications; 2) have been identified and/or requested by Council to be brought forward for 2025 budget consideration over the past year; and 3) have been identified by staff related to operational efficiencies, compliance requirements, recommended service level upgrades, or improvements.
- Council is asked to identify any other items they would like to address as potential items for inclusion in 2025 budget deliberations.
- Additional items approved for 2025 budget consideration will be brought forward at the November 12, 2024, budget meeting.

## Previous Report/Authority:

None.

## Analysis:

The 2025 draft operating budget being presented to Council has been prepared using the previous year's budget as a starting point, with the goal of maintaining the programs and services that the residents and businesses of West Grey rely on. These base services are often referred to as core services, or current service level commitments.

Recognizing that current economic conditions have created affordability challenges for many, staff have prepared a draft budget for Council consideration that maintains current service levels while at the same time balancing the need for a reasonable tax levy increase.

Over the course of the past year, there have been several initiatives, projects, or undertakings that have been identified that Council may wish to consider for implementation in 2025. These "additional considerations" are presented in summary in this report for preliminary Council consideration. Any items that Council wishes to bring forward for a more fulsome discussion can be identified, and staff will prepare business cases and cost estimates for the November 12, 2024, budget meeting deliberations.

### Municipality of West Grey 2024-2026 Strategic Plan considerations:

1.	<b>Entry and gateway signage</b> Year #1 – gateway/entrance signage; Year #2 – directional/tourism signage; Year #3 – interpretative signage	\$25,000/year	3-year phased
2.	<b>Electronic customer feedback kiosks</b>	\$20,000	One-time
3.	<b>Economic development officer</b> Proposed hire date of September 1, 2025, and annualized in future years	\$24,000	Annual
4.	<b>Culinary trail development</b>	\$10,000	One-time
5.	<b>Downtown wi-fi</b> Year #1 in primary settlement areas - Durham and Neustadt; Year #2 – Ayton and Elmwood	\$10,000/year	2-year phased

**Items identified by staff for consideration:**

	<p><b>Human resources/joint health and safety coordinator</b></p> <p>Will explore contract or staff options; critical to ensure compliance with employment standards, and joint health and safety legislation; opportunities for rebates to WSIB annual premiums</p>	<p>\$70,000</p> <p>(with potential offset of WSIB premiums of up to \$40,000 annually)</p>	Annual
	<p><b>eScribe encoder</b></p> <p>Council meetings are currently available electronically but housed on a third-party site. The eScribe encoder will ensure that the Municipality retains control of all meeting video and intellectual property rights; will allow meetings to be livestreamed directly to the Council calendar; will tag video to corresponding agenda items; and will allow viewers to jump directly to specific agenda items without scrubbing the entire video.</p>	\$10,250	Annual
	<p><b>Community flagpole</b></p> <p>Increased number of requests for community flag raisings; currently the municipal flag needs to be removed to accommodate these requests; a dedicated community flagpole has been suggested by members of Council to accommodate future requests.</p>	\$10,000	One-time
	<p><b>Community garden expansion</b></p> <p>Current program is over-subscribed; 8 raised beds in full operation, with a waitlist of over 20 users; current budget \$1,500; recommendation to increased # of raised beds annually (additional 3-4 beds/year) to meet demand.</p>	\$2,500	Annual

	<b>New comprehensive Official Plan</b>  Required to meet provincial guidelines; 8 provincial policy updates in the past year that need to be considered in new WG OP.	\$80,000	One-time
	<b>Storm water master plan</b>  As required for Consolidated Linear Infrastructure Environmental Compliance approval.	\$30,000/year	3-year phased

**West Grey Library items for consideration:**

	<b>Part-time Library Assistant (Programming)</b>  Increase Ayton branch houses by one hour on Saturdays to align with Neustadt and Durham.	\$20,256	Annual
	<b>Library website refresh</b>  Increased demand by library patrons for online information and resources; website needs to be updated to accommodate changing usage patterns.	\$4,000	One-time
	<b>Phone system update</b>  To align the phone system between the three library sites and the municipal office.	\$2,500	One-time

**West Grey Police Services items for consideration (\*not approved by WG Police Services Board prior to municipal budget meetings):**

	<b>1 x constable (January 1, 2025)</b>	\$93,317	Annual
	<b>1 x constable</b>  Proposed hire date of September 2025 and annualized in future years	\$25,642	Annual

**Financial Implications:**

Once Council provides direction on additional items they want to consider for the 2025 budget, staff will bring forward fulsome business cases and cost estimates.

**Communication Plan:**

Communication of this report is through the posting of council meeting agendas on the West Grey website.

**Consultation:**

Leadership Team

**Attachments:**

None.

**Submission recommended and approved by:**

Michele Harris, Chief Administrative Officer

For more information on this report, please contact Michele Harris, Chief Administrative Officer at [mharris@westgrey.com](mailto:mharris@westgrey.com) or 519-369-2200, ext. 222.