



Date: 2024-12-20

To: Township of Lake of Bays Mayor and Councillors
Patricia Allen, Township of Lake of Bays Treasurer
Carrie Sykes, Township of Lake of Bays Clerk

Re: **2025 Draft Operating and Capital Budget**

The Lake of Bays Association (LOBA) represents ratepayers whose taxes are a large part of the revenue of the Township of Lake of Bays. LOBA supports a municipal budget that funds needed community services and infrastructure, provided the budget is financially responsible and well justified.

While we appreciate that there are real challenges involved in finalizing a municipal budget, our view is that the 2025 Budget process to date is deficient and lacking in transparency.

The draft budget presented at the December 10 meeting has no detailed justification for operating items brought forward, and no identification of potential opportunities to reduce operating costs.

The capital budget information is conspicuously incomplete, as the roads consultant report and necessary information from the fire department have not yet been provided. We understand that information will be brought forward on January 10, 2025.

A potential source of revenue - development charges - is not included for discussion.

Actual expenditures are not being used as the basis for planning. Instead, the 2024 budget is used which means Council does not have the benefit of knowing the expenditure patterns from the most recent year.

There was no explanation of why a rate increase of 8% in particular is proposed, and no analysis of the impact of debt financing.

In sum, important information that Council needs to make responsible decisions has not yet been made available. The lack of transparency also limits the ability of the Township's ratepayers to assess the reasonableness of budgetary decisions and reduces Council's public accountability.

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LOBA asks that a revised and improved draft budget be prepared, and tabled for public comment and Council discussion, before the final version is then brought forward for ratification. This will give LOBA a more meaningful opportunity for input.

Sincerely,

Tim Hadwen, Chair Planning, Development and Government Relations Committee

Copies: Paul Gleeson, LOBA President

Kathryn Ogryzlo, LOBA Treasurer

LOBA Planning Development and Government Relations Committee members