



Date: 2025-11-07

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

Re: 2026 Township of Lake of Bays Draft Operating and Capital Budget

The Lake of Bays Association (LOBA) represents over 1200 shoreline ratepayer families 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.

We commend Township staff for a 2026 comprehensive business plan, tied to the budget. This does make the connection between the budget and Council's strategic priorities more transparent and accountable. The budget itself is well organized, with complete costings, and clear explanations of proposed expenditures. We applaud each department appearing before Council to explain proposed budget items. This fosters increased consideration by departments of the strength of the justification for increases, and increased ability for Council to assess the true need for expenditures. It also increases public understanding of the budget. We hope this much improved process and presentation continues in future years. We also suggest the Township look at multi-year operational budgeting, which is in place at both the District Municipality of Muskoka and in the Town of Huntsville.

We are concerned that the proposed 5.56 % tax levy increase in the budget is an increase much greater than inflation, which is currently 2.4%. It is also much greater than the yearly Ontario Consumer Price Index increase of 2.0% in the most recent month. And this proposed tax levy increase follows multiple yearly increases well in excess of inflation. There is also a significant use of reserves to meet costs. All of this is just not a sustainable approach to budgeting. We note the proposed tax levy increase is also 0.69 % more than the 4.87% tax levy increase in the Huntsville 2026 budget.

We appreciate that many of the proposed increases in expenditures are worthy, but they need to be phased in over time at a pace that maintains a reasonable rate of budget increase.

LOBA very much supports the 2026 hiring of a by-law enforcement officer for a septic tank inspection program. Such a program is in place in other municipalities including the Township of Muskoka Lakes, and for very good reason. Malfunctioning septic systems are a real lake pollution risk. We are aware that some cottages around Lake of Bays have older legacy systems that need to be inspected and, if necessary, remediated. We ask that the design of the program prioritize the inspection of those older systems.

We thank you for your attention, and for your ongoing leadership in maintaining the environment and providing good municipal services, within a fiscally responsible budget.

Respectfully,

Paul Gleeson
President

Tim Hadwen
Chair, Planning, Development and Government Relations Committee

Copies: Sarah Macintosh, LOBA Treasurer
LOBA Planning, Development & Government Relations Committee
LOBA Board of Directors