
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report PDD-02-2022 Grand River Conservation Authority 2022 Municipal Levy



For Consideration by Council in Committee on February 8, 2022

OBJECTIVE:

To advise Council of the upcoming Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) budget meeting to approve their 2022 levy, which requires funding from Haldimand County.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report PDD-02-2022 Grand River Conservation Authority 2022 Municipal Levy, be received.

Prepared by: Shannon VanDalen, MCIP, RPP, CMMI, Manager of Planning and Development

Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager of Community & Development Services

Approved: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Haldimand County has been provided with information outlining a proposed 2022 levy of \$180,063 for the Grand River Conservation Authority, an increase of 2.8% over last year's levy and representing a \$4,923 increase. The Authority's Board meeting to approve this proposed budget is scheduled for Friday February 25th, 2022.

A protocol developed many years ago between Conservation Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario gives municipalities control over only the amount of discretionary nonmatching Conservation Authority levies to be set annually. These levies are set by the Authority Board and are allocated to member municipalities based on their share of assessment in the watershed. Appointees to each Authority are expected to vote on proposed Conservation Authority levies based on the direction of their respective Municipal Council. Given the small magnitude of change, staff are not recommending any specific direction be given to this municipality's appointees regarding the general levies proposed by the Grand River Conservation Authority for 2022.

BACKGROUND:

Haldimand County funds three Conservation Authorities whose watersheds fall within this municipality's boundaries. The general levy for each Conservation Authority is apportioned to its watershed municipalities on the basis of a "modified current value assessment" model as set out in Ontario Regulation 670/2000.

The *Conservation Authorities Act* (the "Act") requires Conservation Authorities to provide notice to their member municipalities regarding the coming year's levies. Ontario Regulations 139/96 and 106/98 both state that 30 days notice must be provided to the municipality of a meeting being held by the Conservation Authority to approve the non-matching levy. The GRCA Board of Directors intends to vote

on the Final 2022 budget at its February 25th, 2022 meeting. Following Council's consideration of this report, the resolution will be shared with the GRCA.

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority 2022 Levy was approved by Haldimand County Council in December 2021 and the 2022 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority information is anticipated to be provided early in the first quarter of the year.

ANALYSIS:

A total of 41% of the County's total area is within the GRCA watershed and is one of twenty-two (22) municipalities with a share of membership in the Conservation Authority. Any proposed special levies are subject to the approval of only the benefiting municipality. There are no special projects planned for Haldimand County in 2022.

The table below shows the total impact of the municipal levy:

	2021 Levy	2022 Levy	Change (\$)	Percentage (%) Change
GRCA	\$175,140	\$180,063	\$4,923	2.8

It is noted that the 2020 Levy was \$170,458, and so, the 2022 proposal is consistent with the increases of the last 2 years.

Generally, appointees to each Conservation Authority are to vote on the proposed levy apportionment based on the direction of their respective Municipal Councils. Given the overall minor impact in costs to the County, staff have not recommended that any specific direction be given to Haldimand's appointees regarding the 2022 levy proposed by the Grand River Conservation Authority. If Council supports this approach, this report need only be received as information; otherwise, specific direction by resolution should be given to the County's appointees.

In October 2021, the Province passed new regulations under the *Conservation Authorities Act* to implement changes required under Bill 229. These changes include Mandatory Programs and Services, and Transition Plans and Agreements for Programs and Services. The Mandatory Programs and Services is funded through the municipal levy and is not anticipated to have any significant impact. Based on this, the Conservation Authorities will continue to provide the services for permit and application review and assessment regarding natural hazards, as well, the conservation and management of lands and source water protection. The other changes (including non-mandatory programs) will require a separate agreement to be entered into between the municipality and the Conservation Authority. Any non-mandatory programs and services would have to come from funding sources outside the municipal levy, such as municipal contributions, self-generating revenue, contracts or grants, and would require consultation with the County. In 2022, the GRCA will be completing an inventory of services with associated costs and working with municipalities regarding services and agreement negotiations. The Memoranda's of Understanding and Agreement's are required to be in place by January 1, 2024.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

In the past, Haldimand County Council chose to allow each of its Board appointees to "vote their conscience" at the budget approval meetings. If the current Council supports the same approach, this report need only be received as information. Otherwise, specific direction by resolution should be given to the County's appointees as to how they should vote on the upcoming Grand River Conservation Authority 2022 Budget.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. GRCA – Summary of Municipal Levy – 2022 Budget.