



The Corporation of the Municipality of Whitestone

**Agenda for the Special Council Meeting
Tuesday December 2, 2025**

By Zoom conferencing only:

Join Zoom Meeting
(Video)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85128902948>

(Phone Call Only)

Dial 1-647-374-4685 then Enter Meeting ID: 851 2890 2948#

*Every effort is made to record meetings with the exception of the Closed Session matters.
Both the audio and video are posted on the Municipal Website.
The written minutes are the official record of the meeting.*

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call** **10:00 a.m.**

National Anthem

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement

The Municipality of Whitestone recognizes all of Canada resides on traditional, unceded and/or treaty lands of the Indigenous People of Turtle Island.

We recognize our Municipality on The Robinson Huron Treaty territory is home to many past, present and future Indigenous families.

This acknowledgment of the land is a declaration of our commitment and collective responsibility to reconcile the past, and to honour and value the culture, history and relationships we have with one another.

- 2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**
- 3. Approval of Agenda ®**

4. Presentations and Delegations - None

5. Committee of the Whole

5.1 Pre-Budget Discussion ®

5.1.1 Report FIN-2025-14, 2026 Pre-Budget Discussion

5.1.2 Report ADMIN-2025-22, Proposed Dunchurch Highway Sidewalk Extension

6 Public Meeting - None

7 Consent Agenda - None

Items listed under the Consent Agenda are considered routine and will be enacted in one motion. A Member of Council may request one or more items to be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion and/or action.

8 Accounts Payable - None

9 Staff Reports - None

10 By-laws - None

11 Business Matters - None

12 Correspondence - None

13 Councillor Items - None

14 Questions from the Public

15 Closed Session - None

16 Confirming By-law ®

17 Adjournment ®



Municipality of Whitestone

Report to Council

Prepared for: Council

Department: Finance

Agenda Date: December 2, 2025

Report No: FIN-2025-14

Subject:

2026 Pre-Budget Discussion

Recommendation:

THAT The Council of the Municipality of Whitestone hereby receives report FIN-2025-14 2026 Pre-Budget Discussion for information purposes.

Background:

The purpose of this report is to outline the major pressures, constraints, and considerations that will influence development of the 2026 municipal budget. This report is intended to frame Council's pre-budget discussion and gather Council's direction before staff begin preparing the draft budget in early 2026.

Mandatory Budget Pressures (Non-Discretionary):

a) Payroll & Benefits

- COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment): 2.2% based on October CPI
- Grid step movement: 3%–3.5% for eligible employees
- Benefit costs (EI, CPP, WSIB, Benefits, OMERS): Increase proportionate to salary and wage adjustments

b) Insurance & Risk

- Anticipated premium increases of 8-10%

c) Utilities & Energy

- Heating Fuel
 - Propane pricing for rural Northern Ontario remains volatile and is dependent on global markets and winter demand. 2026 rates are not yet available, so propane should be treated as a potential cost pressure until supplier pricing is confirmed.

- Hydro
 - Continuing upward trend due to regulatory & distribution charges: anticipated increase 5–7%.
- Transportation Fuel (Gasoline & Diesel)
 - Early projections indicate a modest decrease from 2025 levels due to stabilized global supply; however, fuel remains volatile, and overall operating costs will still depend on municipal fleet usage.

d) Contracted Services

- Whitestone depends on several contracted services essential for municipal operations. These costs are largely fixed or externally determined.
- Waste disposal & landfill operations: Hauling and disposal fees continue to rise due to fuel, equipment, and labour pressures
- Policing (OPP): Costs are mandated; the 2026 increase is capped at 11%, with no municipal discretion
- Software & digital systems: Core systems such as financial software, payroll, GIS/mapping, and administrative platforms are essential for day-to-day operations. Annual maintenance and subscription fees continue to increase, contributing to rising operating costs.

e) Asset Management & Capital

- 2026 capital needs identified through the Asset Management Plan
- Required lifecycle maintenance for critical infrastructure
- Existing commitments from prior years' projects

f) External Levies

- Mandatory charges from external bodies
- Levies are not optional, and the municipality must pay the full amount once issued
- 2026 levy amounts are not yet confirmed and will be included in the draft operating budget once available

g) Revenue Impacts

- NORDS: Removal of the annual gravel resurfacing grant (~\$120,000). Replacement funding may be available but is not yet confirmed. If unsuccessful, staff propose reducing resurfacing activities from three roads to one.
- Recycling Revenue (Circular Materials): Funding is expected to decrease under the provincial producer-responsibility framework, resulting in an estimated \$30,000 reduction. Staff are compiling documentation of actual depot operating costs to request a formula adjustment.

Favourable Budget Impacts:

a) Payroll & Benefits

- WSIB Premium Rate reduction: 7.5%
- Reduction in staffing hours: estimated savings of approximately \$5,000

b) Contracted Services

- Cemetery grass cutting: Staff propose using municipal summer students instead of contracted services, resulting in an estimated \$7,000 savings.

c) Revenues

- Potential increase in Canada Day grant funding
- Annual allocation of \$136,879 (OCIF) and \$70,413 (CCBF) for core infrastructure
- OMPF funding increase of 17% for a total allocation of \$1,514,800
- Potential increases to user fees pending comparability analysis with local municipalities

Areas Where Council Input Is Needed:

To prepare a draft budget aligned with Council's priorities, staff require direction in the following areas:

a) *Service Levels*

Council is asked to consider whether current service levels should be:

- Maintained
- Enhanced
- Reduced or restructured

Examples:

- Roads maintenance priorities
- Landfill operations and hours
- Community programming support
- Recreation and events funding

b) *Capital Priorities*

The AMP guides required capital work. Staff request Council's input on:

- New capital initiatives to investigate
- Any interest in advancing or deferring AMP items
- Preferred funding strategies for 2026

c) Reserves Strategy

Staff seek direction on:

- Continuing current reserve contributions
- Adjusting contributions due to cost pressures
- Using reserves strategically to stabilize tax increases

d) Revenue Strategy

Council feedback is requested regarding:

- Tax levy expectations (increase, maintain, or phase-in approach)
- User fee adjustments (landfill, admin fees, recreation)
- Grant opportunities to pursue

Next Steps

December: Staff incorporate Council feedback in preparing the capital and operating budgets

January: Draft 2026 Capital Budget presented

February: Draft 2026 Operating Budget presented

Link to Strategic Plan:

2. Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability

Respectfully submitted by:



Jessica Sinkowski
Treasurer/Tax Collector

Reviewed by:



Nigel Black
CAO/Clerk

ATTACHMENT A – 2025 Estimated Reserve Balances

ATTACHMENT B – 2025 Capital Project Update

2025 Reserves & Deferred Grants - Estimated Closing Balances

Reserve	2024 Closing Balance	2025 Transfers In	2025 Estimated Transfers Out	2025 Project Deferrals	2025 Estimated Closing Balance
13-311-1 Asset Management Reserve	964,652	485,000	(16,428)	(25,000)	1,433,224
13-312 Parkland Reserve	181,858	18,550	(29,178)	(10,000)	171,229
13-314 Fire Pumper	(2)	65,000	0		64,998
13-314-1 Fire Vehicle/Equipment	66,500	10,000	(36,576)		39,924
13-316 Forest Fire Reserve	50,533	0			50,533
13-321 Roads Equipment Reserve	75,435				75,435
13-326 Thrift Shop Reserve	25,255		(5,000)		20,255
13-328 Landfill Reserve	48,718	45,000			93,718
13-331 Cemetery Reserve	2,478				2,478
13-332 Cemetery Capital	13,721				13,721
13-342 Kashe Dam	12,000				12,000
13-343 Building Vehicle Reserve	43,000				43,000
13-344 Facilities Vehicle Reserve	39,854				39,854
13-348 Building Reserve	37,208				37,208
Total Reserve	1,561,210	623,550	(87,181)	(35,000)	2,097,578

Deferred Grants	2024 Closing Balance	2025 Transfers In	2025 Estimated Transfers Out	2025 Project Deferrals	2025 Estimated Closing Balance
12-321 Deferred CCBF Grant (Gas Tax)	680	70,413			71,093
12-322 Deferred OCIF Grant	48,179	152,088		(150,000)	50,267
Total Deferred Grants	48,859	222,501	-	(150,000)	121,360

2025 Capital Project Update

Project # / Description	Budget	Actuals	Variance	Funding Source	Status
19-100 Computer Upgrades	5,000	478	4,522	Tax Levy	To be completed by year-end
19-110 Community Centre Communications	7,500	4,740	2,760	Parkland Dedication Reserve	Complete
19-110-1 AMP Consultant Phase 2 & 3	22,000	28,391	(6,391)	Tax Levy	In progress - defer remainder to 2026
19-115 Official Plan Consultant	63,555	26,473	37,082	Tax Levy	In progress - defer remainder to 2026
16-117 Demolition of Twist Building	15,000	16,173	(1,173)	Asset Management Reserve	Complete
19-209 Replace Rescue 1	20,000	20,226	(226)	Fire Equipment Reserve	Complete
19-210 Replace Radio	14,200	8,640	5,560	Fire Equipment Reserve	Complete
19-211 Replace Oil Furnace Stn 2	8,000	5,989	2,011	Fire Equipment Reserve	Complete
19-212 Replace Washer	2,000	1,720	280	Fire Equipment Reserve	Complete
19-213 SCBA Air Bottles	16,461	16,461	0	Ontario Fire Services Grant	Complete
19-300 Surface Treatment	105,000	0	105,000	OCIF Grant	Deferred to 2026
19-308 Bridge Structure Rehab	45,000	0	45,000	OCIF Grant	To be completed by year-end
19-352 Ladd Rd Bridge Rehab Analysis	25,000	0	25,000	Asset Management Reserve	Deferred to 2026
19-714-2 AODA Automatic Door Openers	10,000	0	10,000	Parkland Dedication Reserve	To be completed by year-end
19-714-3 Community Centre Vinyl Siding	16,000	14,438	1,562	Parkland Dedication Reserve	Complete
19-719 Admin Building Exterior Repairs	4,000	254	3,746	Asset Management Reserve	Complete
19-814 Recreation Playground Project	10,000	0	10,000	Parkland Dedication Reserve	Deferred to 2026
TOTAL	388,716	143,984	244,732		



Municipality of Whitestone

Report to Council

Prepared for: Council

Department: Administration

Agenda Date: December 2, 2025

Report No: ADMIN-2025-22

Subject:

Proposed Dunchurch Highway Sidewalk Extension.

Recommendation:

THAT the Council the Municipality of Whitestone receives for information report ADMIN-2025-22 (Sidewalk Project Update).

Background:

The subject of possible grant funding for a Sidewalk Extension project was recently raised. More specifically, it was discussed that the Municipality may have forgone grant funding. While discussion of this project pre-dates my employment, I have investigated the issue and found that the last time this issue was discussed was in April of 2024 and discussions of the project date back to 2021.

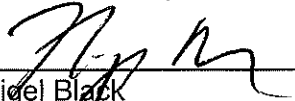
I have included a copy of the memorandum that former Manager of Public Works presented to Mayor and Council on the subject in April of 2024. As you will read in that report, the Municipality had indeed applied for and been approved for funding of a sidewalk Extension project. The grant funding was different however than what had recently been suggested in Council discussions. For clarity, the grant funding for the project was for 60% of the project costs with a maximum provincial contribution of \$132,000. As you will also read in the report, the project cost estimate increased significantly from the time that the application was made. 2024 estimates were prepared for 2 different project scopes, both Option 1 and Options 2 were considerably higher than the approved project budget; with costs estimated at between \$383,300 and \$592,000.

Based on these facts, the direction from that meeting was that Council would have to have additional discussion about the funding shortfall when considering the budget for 2025.

Unfortunately, due to the staff turnover in the CAO and Public Works Manager positions, this information was not transferred and as such no additional discussion took place during the deliberations for the 2025 budget. Also, the grant funding required expenditure of funds and

completion of project by 2025. Had the discussion occurred, it is difficult to say if there would have been Council commitment to the sizable amount of budget required to complete the project.

Submitted by:



Nigel Black
CAO/Clerk

Attachment 1 – Memorandum April 16, 2024 – Update on Proposed Dunchurch Sidewalk Extension



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council

From: Dave Creasor, Manager of Public Works

Date: April 16, 2024

Re: Update on proposed Dunchurch Sidewalk extension, Highway 124, Marina Drive to Moore Drive

Overview:

The purpose of this Memo is to provide an update to Council in respect of the costs and options for the proposed sidewalk extension in Dunchurch along Hwy 124, from Marina Drive to Moore Drive. This project aims to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility in the community by extending the sidewalk infrastructure along this key thoroughfare.

Background:

An email was received on March 18, 2021, requesting consideration for the upcoming Whitestone 2021 Capital Budget. This email has been attached **Attachment A**.

At the March 29, 2021 Special Council meeting, **Resolution No. 2021-113**, approving funding for engineering and design (**Attachment B**).

Staff also applied for funding for this project through the Active Transportation Fund. This was funding was approved (see below for further information). On December 12, 2023, **By-law No. 74-2023**, being a By-law to authorize entering into with His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities in respect of the Active Transportation Fund and a contribution for the Dunchurch accessible sidewalk was passed by Council.

Two versions of a sidewalk along the east side of Highway 124 have been prepared, each addressing pedestrian safety and accessibility challenges in the area.

1. Option 1: Concrete Sidewalk with Curbs and Catch Basins:

- This option involves installing a concrete sidewalk with curbs and catch basins along the designated route, with an estimated cost of \$592,200. While it provides a durable and permanent pathway for pedestrians, it comes with significant expenses due to challenges such as crossing deep swamps and widening the existing rock cut.

2. Option 2: Widened Road Platform with Asphalt Walkway and Hatched Dividing Strip:

- Alternatively, this option proposes widening the road platform to accommodate a 1.5-metre-wide asphalt walkway, delineated by a hatched dividing strip. The estimated cost for this option is \$383,300. Although it offers a broader pathway, it also encounters challenges such as rock excavation and relocation of culverts, contributing to its higher cost.

Both versions require approval from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), and a Building and Land Use Permit, with consideration that the MTO may not approve the lower-cost Version 1.

Staff have contacted MTO in respect of coordinating future Highway 124 reconstruction through Dunchurch with the proposed sidewalk reconstruction. No reconstruction is planned in the near future.

Funding

A grant has been secured through the Active Transportation Fund (ATF), with an approved contribution up to 60% of the total eligible expenditures, capped at \$132,000. The initial predesign estimate, completed in 2021, was \$220,000. The funding needs to be spent by 2025.

During discussions with the ATF administrator, concerns were raised regarding significant increases in our project costs. They realize this is a common problem across municipalities, impacting the feasibility of various projects.

As we navigate through the decision-making process, it's crucial to consider the funding constraints and potential challenges associated with project completion.

A decision of Council will be required during 2025 Budget discussions should Whitestone wish to proceed.

ATTACHMENT A:

From: Ed Cann
Sent: March 18, 2021 12:37 PM
To: 'michelle' <Hendry@whitestone.ca>
Cc: mayor.comrie@whitestone.ca; 'Beth Gorham-Matthews' <councillor.gorham-matthews@whitestone.ca>; councillor.lamb@whitestone.ca; councillor.mcewen@whitestone.ca; councillor.woods@whitestone.ca; 'Carol Cann'
Subject: Suggestion for 2021Whitestone Capital Budget

Dear Ms. Hendry CAO

I would like to see a paved sidewalk constructed on one or both sides of Highway 124 going west from the Community Center, extending to at least Duck Rock. There are existing paved sidewalks going east from the Community Center.

Cars and vehicles are parked on the shoulders of Highway 124, especially when there are functions taking place in the town, and this leaves pedestrians with no choice but to walk on the highway which is very hazardous. We do have many retirees and seniors in our community and they should not have to walk on the highway.

Would you please add this suggestion to the agenda, under correspondence, for discussion by the Town Council at an upcoming Council Meeting?

Respectfully submitted

Ed & Carol Cann

Resolution No. 2021-113

Moved by: Councillor Joe McEwen

Seconded by: Councillor Beth Gorham-Matthews

- 9.1 Memo and presentation regarding *Draft* Operating and Capital Budget for the year 2021 – refinements from the March 15, 2021 meeting and ongoing discussion items

THAT the Council of the Municipality of Whitestone receives the Memo and Presentation regarding Draft Operating and Capital Budget for the year 2021 for information;

AND THAT the Council of the Municipality of Whitestone confirms the following additional budget items to the Capital program:

- Addition of \$80,000 to the operating budget for gravel resurfacing;
- Addition of \$6,000 for engineering, design and MTO approvals for sidewalk construction on Highway 124 in Dunchurch;
- Addition of \$20,000 to finalize design and engineering matters in respect of the Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic expansion project;