

**From:** [j.stein](#)  
**To:** [Lillianne Dunstall](#); [Harvir Sidhu](#); [Stewart Cressman](#); [Steven Martin](#); [Kris Wilkinson](#); [Natasha Salonen](#); [Carly Pettinger](#); [Kaitlin Bos](#)  
**Cc:** [j.stein](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Urgent Concerns Regarding Township Proposed Tax Increase  
**Date:** January 3, 2025 4:21:14 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**My apologies for resending this, but I realized that I had not sent it as part of the original email chain.**

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**Deputy Clerk Bos, please add this to a future Council Agenda Package under correspondence to form part of the official record. Thanks.**

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Councillor Dunstall, thank you for your quick reply, and for your interest in my concerns:

To begin, I have been unable to find a single instance in the past decade where a township, region, or small city in Canada has subjected its residents to a 50% increase in property taxes. This alone should underscore the implausibility of the proposed budget. While Windsor recently faced a similar rate adjustment, this was due to changes in accounting for their Tax Rebate system and should not result in a substantial increase in annual tax burdens.

As well, the current proposal is not a realistic budget but rather a wish list detached from economic realities. Recent drops in interest rates, shifts in Federal immigration policy, potential impacts from the U.S. Presidential election, and an international slowdown in evolving-industry needs, such as in EV development, all call for a more measured approach.

Now to the specific point in question, it is my understanding that Councillor Wilkinson has previously requested financial information from city staff, yet in some cases has been waiting months without any substantive response. This pattern suggests a troubling disregard for accountability under the CAO's leadership. I do not know if this has been the case for all Council members.

A specific example illustrates my concern: the proposed acquisition of 4 new fire trucks for the Township of Wilmot's Fire Department. Councillor Sidhu raised this issue during the Staff Presentation of the Draft 2025 Budget and it remained unanswered. However, basic research reveals that the department responds to approximately 550 calls annually, averaging 1.5 calls per day, many of which are not fire-related. This raises a critical question: how can such a significant expenditure be justified at this time given these numbers?

Greg Clark's focus should be on developing a financially responsible budget grounded in a thorough understanding of the township's assets and liabilities. In any well-managed organization, financial questions can be answered clearly and in detail. If this is not currently possible within the township, addressing that deficiency should be

his top priority.

In the interim, I believe the township should be presented with a one-year emergency budget that prioritizes immediate, essential funding needs. This would allow time to modernize the township’s financial systems—an issue Clark himself has acknowledged—and establish the groundwork for sustainable, long-term planning.

In challenging financial circumstances, the responsible course of action is to streamline operations, eliminate underperforming assets, and focus on stabilizing the organization’s finances. Only then should the township begin to consider long-term goals and outward-looking initiatives. The immediate priority should be righting the ship, not pursuing untenable and unsubstantiated agendas.

Regards  
Joanna Manz

On Tue, Dec 31, 2024 at 1:09 PM Lillianne Dunstall <[lillianne.dunstall@wilmot.ca](mailto:lillianne.dunstall@wilmot.ca)> wrote:

Joanna, thank you for reaching out. Your concerns are important and certainly warrant investigation. Could you kindly provide further clarification on the following statement? What have you observed that led to your belief? We take constituents concerns seriously and I would like to follow up.

*“I am particularly troubled by the proposed budget and, more importantly, the CAO’s apparent unwillingness or inability to answer basic questions from Council regarding the methodology and financial data used to craft it. His evident dislike for being questioned—bordering on arrogance—is concerning.*



**Lillianne Dunstall**

Councillor, Ward 4

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**From:** j stein [REDACTED] >

**Sent:** December 30, 2024 5:05 PM

**To:** Kaitlin Bos <[kaitlin.bos@wilmot.ca](mailto:kaitlin.bos@wilmot.ca)>

**Cc:** Kris Wilkinson <[kris.wilkinson@wilmot.ca](mailto:kris.wilkinson@wilmot.ca)>; Natasha Salonen <[natasha.salonen@wilmot.ca](mailto:natasha.salonen@wilmot.ca)>; Harvir Sidhu <[harvir.sidhu@wilmot.ca](mailto:harvir.sidhu@wilmot.ca)>; Steven Martin <[steven.martin@wilmot.ca](mailto:steven.martin@wilmot.ca)>; Lillianne Dunstall <[lillianne.dunstall@wilmot.ca](mailto:lillianne.dunstall@wilmot.ca)>; Carly Pettinger <[carly.pettinger@wilmot.ca](mailto:carly.pettinger@wilmot.ca)>; Stewart Cressman <[stewart.cressman@wilmot.ca](mailto:stewart.cressman@wilmot.ca)>

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Hello to Mayor Salonen and Council,

As a new resident of Wilmot, I was shocked to learn about the Township's current financial predicament and the opaque manner in which the Acting CAO has responded. I am particularly troubled by the proposed budget and, more importantly, the CAO's apparent unwillingness or inability to answer basic questions from Council regarding the methodology and financial data used to craft it. His evident dislike for being questioned—bordering on arrogance—is concerning. This is not a desirable quality in an Acting CAO, whose duty is to ensure Council has the information needed to make informed and prudent decisions.

I am therefore also alarmed by the proposed 50.8% tax increase, which I believe to be unacceptably high and unsustainable.

It is imperative that Council takes immediate and decisive action to address this issue by:

- **Conducting a thorough review of the existing budget to identify areas where expenditures can be reduced and the proposed tax increase can be lowered;**
- **Revisiting the screening and hiring process for the CAO to ensure it clearly defines the role of the CAO in relation to the Mayor and Council;**
- **Engaging a municipal finance expert to perform a comprehensive audit, identify any deficiencies in financial protocols, and recommend best practices to prevent similar financial challenges in the future.**

The residents of Wilmot deserve responsible governance and transparency. I urge Council to prioritize these measures for the long-term stability of our community.

Sincerely,

Joanna Manz

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