Budget and Finance Committee
Agenda

September 24, 2025

9:30 a.m.

Grey County Administration Building

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c. Manager Performance and Culture, Human Resources and,

d. Business/Data Analyst, Technology and Information Services; and,

That staff be directed to include two student positions within the 2027 forecast budget; and,

That all positions forecast in the 2027 budget be subject to further review for necessity through the 2027 budget process.

5. Closed Meeting Matters

That the Budget and Finance Committee does now go into closed session pursuant to Section 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, to discuss:

i. (d) labour relations or employee negotiations (bargaining updates)

6. Correspondence

7. Other Business

8. Next Meeting Date

Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

9. Adjournment

Long Term Care
Budget Overview

Budget and Finance Committee Presentation

2025

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Overview

- Departmental Overview
- Capital Funding Sources
- Capital Assets
- Project Identification, Timing & Planning
- Determining & Tracking Budget
- Rockwood Redevelopment
- Home Specific Highlights

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Departmental Overview

Grey Gables
- 66 Beds
- “original” 1903 House of Refuge, rebuilt in 1997
- Approximately 25 admissions/year
- In 2021, Maple Lane transitioned to offer a Behavioural Support Transition Unit

Lee Manor
- 151 Beds
- Opened in 1973, refurbished in 2006
- Joint development by the Lee Estate, City of Owen Sound, County of Grey and Province of Ontario
- Approximately 66 admissions/year

Rockwood Terrace
- 102 Beds
- Opened in 1984
- Approximately 41 admissions/year
- Currently in the redevelopment process.
- The redevelopment will include the 128-bed long term care home

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Departmental Overview

Who we serve

319
Total Residents

115 New Admissions
(yearly average)

3 OUT OF 4 people entering long-term care have 3 or more different medical conditions

72% of long-term care residents have moderate to severe cognitive impairment

89% of residents need support with activities of daily living

Who we are

640 Staff

250 DCPs

36 Volunteers

170 Student Placements
(yearly average-PSW & Registered)

17 Physicians

3 Nurse Practitioners

22 Partners in Care

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Capital Funding Sources

- Ministry of Long-Term Care – Capital Funding is available
  - Comprehensive Minor Capital
    - Funding outlined for minor repair and upkeep of Long-Term Care homes
    - Prescribed rate of $55.69 per bed per month
  - LTC home-specific Reserves
  - County of Grey taxation

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Capital Assets

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Project Identification, Timing, Planning

Replacement

- Ongoing cycle – e.g. beds, mattresses, lifts
- Review of assets condition regularly to adjust replacement cycle
- Lifts - Arjo servicing program a significant financial benefit

Scheduled

- E.g. Painting cycle every 10 years

Provincial Funding/Direction

- Specialized funds become available due to external factors to prioritize and complete various projects (AC, sprinkler system etc.)

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Determining & Tracking Budget

Request for Proposal (RFP). Quotes are completed in accordance with the policy.

Project timelines adjusted to accommodate Infection Prevention & Control (IPAC) protocols and minimize disruption to vulnerable residents.

Monthly Finance and Procurement meetings with Executive Director and Maintenance of each home to review status updates.

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Rockwood Redevelopment

- Inventory opportunities
- Fixtures Furniture and Equipment
- Operational Readiness 2026 Estimated Budget Impacts

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Home Specific Highlights

Grey Gables

- Copper replacement
- Plumbing fixture replacement
- Nurse Call replacement

Lee Manor

- Nurse Call replacement
- Building Automation System - savings of 10% of energy output according to DEI
- Nursing Station modernization

Rockwood Terrace

- Redevelopment
- Beds with integrated alarm systems - combination of various equipment to be integrated

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Committee Report

To:	Chair Milne and Members of the Budget and Finance Committee
Committee Date:	September 24, 2025
Subject / Report No:	FR-BFC-18-25
Title:	2026 and 2027 Budget Assumptions and Timelines
Prepared by:	Sue Murray, Deputy Treasurer
Reviewed by:	Mary Lou Spicer, Director of Finance/County Treasurer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	

Recommendation

1. **That Report FR-BFC-18-25 regarding the 2026 and 2027 Budget Assumptions and Timelines be received; and**
2. **That the proposed budget assumptions be incorporated into the draft 2026 and proposed 2027 budgets for council's consideration and direction.**

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide committee with an update on the preparation of the 2026 budget and 2027 projected budgets as well as the assumptions and information being used.

Background and Discussion

The annual budget is developed using assumptions about changes to costs, inflation, supply chain pressures, market trends, funding levels, availability of revenue sources and general economic conditions. This report summarizes some of the underlying factors that are influencing the development of the 2026 budget and 2027 proposed budget.

Timelines

The finance budget team has been working with their departments to forecast revenue and expenditures, with the more complex budgets beginning work in the summer.

Meetings to review budgets with the CAO and Deputy CAO are scheduled September 29 to October 15, with the goal of having a preliminary levy increase and a high-level overview by department as well as identifying key impacts for presentation at the October 29 meeting. Capital Budget highlights will also be presented at the October 29th meeting. The following Budget and

Finance Committee meeting has been scheduled for November 26 to review the draft budget that will be discussed at Committee of the Whole on December 5 and 12.

Source of Budget Assumptions

- Budget lines are developed through a combination of reviewing the 2025 budget, year-end projections, historical spending/trends and any adjustments required for inflation, planned spending/programming changes, trends etc.
- Utility costs are budgeted based upon industry projections, compared with prior year increases and reflect any changes in consumption.
- Gas and diesel projected costs are based upon current market conditions and current consumption levels (assuming that there has been no change in level of services; in this case assumptions are made for estimated increases).
- IT provides departments with costing and listings of equipment to be replaced based on lifecycle replacement (such as computers and cellphones)
- For staff covered by collective agreements, salaries and benefits are budgeted based on current negotiated contracts (or estimates if a contract has expired) and reflect recommendations from the Director of Human Resources.
- For non-union staff and council members, the cost-of-living increases will be calculated as per the non-union compensation policy approved by Council which is calculated based on projected increases of the comparator municipalities used in the last compensation review, negotiated union increases, and other published salary data that may be applicable.
- Provincial funding is assumed to continue unless otherwise noted at the committed levels, including any announced funding changes or historical annual funding increases. Funding for the Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) has been confirmed to March 31, 2026, with the proposed budget assuming that the program will continue for the full year in 2026 as well as into 2027.
- Long-Term Care receives Case Mix Index (CMI) funding that is based upon resident level of acuity. The past few years, a CMI calculator from AdvantAge has been used to estimate the level of acuity (funding is based on the province's fiscal year). The calculator's results have varied, and as a result staff have moved back to using the current CMI to determine funding for 2026 and 2027.
- Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) funding is used to support the renewal and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure. Amounts for 2026 and 2027 are unknown; funding can go up or down by up to 15% annually; staff has assumed that the 2026 and 2027 funding will equal the amount received in 2025 ($3,488,105).
- The allocation for Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF formerly known as Federal Gas Tax funding) for 2025-2028 is known ($3,304,651 for 2026 and $3,436,837 for 2027 and 2028).
- Building Condition Assessments (BCAs) and Reserve Funds Analyses are used as a tool to assist in determining project priorities and estimated costs to maintain County assets and funding levels. Departmental staff are encouraged to seek current estimates when developing budgets as the replacement values in the BCAs were developed in late 2020/early 2021.

Budget Impacts

Planning Efficiencies

As directed by Council, staff are continuing to explore potential efficiencies in planning services across Grey County and its member municipalities. Work continues on understanding service level needs of member municipalities, current budgets and staff resources with a series of meetings between interested municipalities and County staff having occurred throughout the summer. Staff anticipate reporting back to Council before the end of 2025 on potential next steps. In preparing for budget 2026, staff have taken a net-zero approach to budgeting assuming that any additional costs borne by the County in assuming planning services will be fully funded by transfers from member municipal budgets. Member municipalities are budgeting on the basis of 'business as normal'. Should a hybrid planning service model be implemented or partially implemented in 2026, then those participating municipalities would co-fund that model from their 2026 budget.

Roads Exchange

County staff continue to work on proposed transfers of County roads to member municipalities, and upload of member municipal roads to the County. Staff are in the process of finalizing the draft MoU's. It is anticipated that exchanges could begin in 2026 pending Council approval and direction and legal background work. Staff are working on a comprehensive budgeting plan associated to the road transfer work and will provide further information as part of the budget process.

Rockwood Terrace Redevelopment Project

The new Rockwood Terrace long term care home is scheduled to open in January 2027 with residents of the existing Rockwood Terrace moving to their new home in early 2027. In order to meet this timeline, existing staff need to be adequately trained and familiar with the new home, and as more residents will be living in the new Rockwood Terrace, new staff will need to be engaged to support residents. Further, it is anticipated that there will be a period of time where the County is responsible for maintenance and upkeep of both buildings, new and old Rockwood. Staff have developed a comprehensive operational readiness plan to support this transition. Timing of implementation of this plan will be adjusted based on completion of construction, however, at this time, staff anticipate approximately $800,000 of additional costs associated with the transition in 2026. These costs will be partially offset with provincial funding to support transitional training. These are one-time costs associated with the transition between homes.

Unanticipated wage and salary pressures

In preparing for budget, staff undertake informal market checks in respect to salary competitiveness with comparators to ensure competitiveness. Over the past 6 months, staff in several business units have experienced staffing pressures which have highlighted salary disparity with competitors. In some areas these are more acute with compression occurring between union and non-union jobs as collective agreements are bargained. Staff are in the process of completing a mid-term mini-market check with our external consultant to understand compensation pressures that may be emerging since the last compensation review was completed to better understand if changes have occurred in the market that may create pressures to budget in 2026/27.

Inflationary and Supply Chain Pressures – 2.0-2.5% increase in costs

Canada's inflation rate slowed to 1.7% in July 2025, down from 1.9% in June 2025 or 2.7% in July 2024. The Bank of Canada's Monetary Policy Report - July 2025 projected inflation would remain around 2% in the second half of 2025 and through to 2027. There is upward pressure on inflation from tariffs and the end of the temporary downward impact from the removal of the consumer carbon tax. This is offset by downward pressure on inflation from excess supply and a stronger Canadian dollar as well as an easing in shelter price inflation.

Investment Income – gradual decline in returns

Based on the Bank of Canada's July Monetary Policy Report and information provided by investment firms, staff have assumed that the Bank of Canada Policy interest rate will decrease a quarter percent in October 2025. Based on these changes, staff have estimated the average bank prime rate to be 4.70% for 2026 and 2027. Based on the above, staff will be using the following interest rates when projecting interest and investment income:

- Average General Bank rate: 2.95% in 2026 and 2027
- Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) rates in 2026 and 2027
    - 1 Year 3.10%
    - 2 Year 3.10%
    - 3 Year 3.45%
    - 4 Year 3.55%
    - 5 Year 3.70%

As per the Cash and Investment Policy, the net revenue budgeted from investments that exceeds 1% of the County's own purpose levy is to be placed in the One-Time Funding Reserve to assist with funding non-recurring expenditures and unexpected costs.

Insurance – 7-7.5% increase in premiums assumed

Staff have assumed an overall increase in general insurance premiums of 7.14% in the 2026 budget and 2027 projection. Staff have estimated the following premiums for 2026 as $1.5M and $1.6M in 2027. This results in an increase of $100,000 in both 2026 and 2027. In the 2025 budget staff budgeted $1.512M for the 2026 projection. Therefore, there is a $12,500 reduction in insurance expenditures compared to the 2026 projection budget.

The Grey County and Owen Sound Housing Corporation, 100% owned by the County of Grey, is covered by a separate insurance policy through HSC Insurance while the remainder of the County's coverage has been through Marsh since 2020. The Housing Corporation's policy has a November renewal while the core County policy is a January renewal. The Housing Corporation's 2025 premium notice is expected this month.

The county has a corporate stabilization insurance reserve which has a target balance between $150,000 and $300,000. The balance in this reserve on December 31, 2024, was $351,200. Due to increasing deductibles in the last several years, staff feel leaving the reserve at this balance is appropriate. In prior years there was a transfer to this reserve of $75,000 per year, the reserve contribution ended in 2023 when the maximum amount was reached. This reserve is used to offset unbudgeted insurance claim deductibles, under deductibles, and differences between the budgeted amount and the renewal costs.

The 2024 Housing policy deductible was increased from $50,000 to $100,000 to mitigate the annual premium increase; the 2025 budget included a $67,100 transfer to reserve to create an insurance reserve specific to Housing and recommends $74,200 contributions thereafter.

Audit Fees

By-law 5221-25 appointed MNP LLP as auditors for the County of Grey for a period of five (5) years beginning with the 2024 fiscal year. The cost for financial auditing services for the first year of this contract (2025) is $96,150, excluding taxes. Staff have assumed a 4% increase in both 2026 and 2027.

Health Unit – 1% levy increase

In August 2023, the Ministry of Health announced a Strengthening Public Health in Ontario strategy, aimed at optimizing capacity, stability, and sustainability in the Province's Public Health system. The plan includes several priorities, including those related to funding for Public Health Units and support for voluntary mergers between existing Health Units. In releasing the plan, the Ministry of Health announced that Public Health Units would receive annual 1% base funding increases over the next three years as the Ministry collaborates with municipalities on a longer-term, sustainable funding agreement.

The 2026 and 2027 budgets have assumed a 1% increase in base funding to Grey Bruce Public Health. In 2025, the anticipated levy increase was $92,300; this was funded through a combination of a $62,300 transfer from the Safe Restart Funding Reserve and an increase of $25,000 to the levy. In 2026 and 2027, if the increase is not partially offset by a transfer from reserve, the levy impact will be $85,100 in 2026 and $18,100 in 2027. Staff have assumed that reserve funding from either the Safe Restart funding reserve or One Time Funding reserve will be used to help mitigate the impact to the levy. Staff have assumed that in 2026 $60,100 will be withdrawn from a reserve and $50,000 in 2027.

Tax Policy and Adjustment to Multi-Residential Ratio

From 2023-2025, both the City of Owen Sound and Grey County moved their multi-residential ratios one quarter of a percent towards equalization with residential and new-multi-residential ratios. Staff have assumed that the ratio will continue to ratchet down in the 2026 budget with 2026 being the final year of the required movement. Consultation with Owen Sound will occur to ensure that the tax decisions for this property class are aligned so that the goal of the ratio adjustment is achieved.

Assessment – trend of gradual growth to continue

Currently there is approximately $1.5M in growth, based on this growth a 1% increase in the residential rate for 2025 will be approximately $798,900. At this time of year, staff begin to monitor assessment weekly as the numbers can fluctuate as Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) processes changes. Based on historical trends, annual assessment growth will be estimated based upon the previous 5-year average. The growth estimate will be updated in the budget with the actual growth results from MPAC's return of the 2025 assessment roll, this information is typically available mid-December.

Supplementary taxation is estimated based on historical trends and MPAC's preliminary new assessment forecast, net of any write-offs.

The county has had the following growth over the last 4 years:

- 2024 Growth $2.0M
- 2023 Growth $1.7M
- 2022 Growth $1.6M
- 2021 Growth $1.2M

Staff receive a quarterly new assessment forecast report from Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). Staff will use this report as well as the last 5 years of actuals to estimate supplemental tax revenue and write-offs.

Prior Decisions Impacting the 2026 and 2027 Budgets

The following past decisions that impact future budgets include:

- Based on the recommendation from Report FR-BFC-24-24 Grey County Asset Management Plan, a levy increase of $1,748,100 will be included in the 2026 budget for asset management. This is a continuation of annual increases to capital spending with the goal of erasing the current infrastructure deficit and reaching target capital asset reinvestment rates by 2039.
- The Budget and Finance Committee reviewed FR-BFC-13-25 Health Care Funding Requests and reduced the transfer to the Heath Care Initiatives reserve for the 2025 and 2026 budgets to $200,000 each year. Currently, there is one commitment of $200,000 annually for 2026-2027 to Brightshores Health System as support for the Wellness & Recovery Centre.
- Set aside 1% of the prior year's levy each year for the Affordable Housing Reserve (as recommended by the Affordable Housing Task Force), this builds on the $654,300 contribution made in 2025. In 2026, the contribution is $783,600 and a $830,600 projected contribution in 2027.

Financial and Resource Implications

The budget assumptions provided in this report will be used to develop the 2026 budget and 2027 projected budgets that are presented to council in the scheduled meetings on December 5 and 12.

Relevant Consultation

☒ Internal Finance team, CAO/Deputy CAO

☐ External

Appendices and Attachments

None.

Committee Report

To:	Chair Milne and Members of the Budget and Finance Committee
Committee Date:	September 24, 2025
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-BFC-14-25
Title:	Staffing Request 2026 - 2027
Prepared by:	Niall Lobley, Deputy CAO
Reviewed by:	Mary Lou Spicer, Director of Finance, Randy Scherzer, CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All

Recommendation

1. **That report CAOR-BFC-14-25 Staffing Request 2026 – 2027 be received; and,**
2. **That staff be directed to include $339,700 in the 2026 budget, and $95,700 in the 2027 budget to accommodate 2026 full time staffing requests; and,**
3. **That staff be directed to include the following full time staffing requests as part of the 2026 budget being,**
    a. **Duty Supervisor (Float), Paramedic Services**
    b. **Mechanic, Transportation Services**
    c. **Law Clerk, Legislative Services, and**
    d. **Coordinator, Climate and Environmental Initiatives; and**
4. **That staff be directed to include two new student positions in the 2026 budget; and,**
5. **That staff be directed to include the following full time staffing positions within the forecast 2027 operating budget, being**
    a. **Mechanic, Transportation Services**
    b. **Facilities Manager, Office of the CAO**
    c. **Manager Performance and Culture, Human Resources and,**
    d. **Business/Data Analyst, Technology and Information Services; and,**
6. **That staff be directed to include two student positions within the 2027 forecast budget; and,**
7. **That all positions forecast in the 2027 budget be subject to further review for necessity through the 2027 budget process.**

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarize the anticipated additional staff resources needed to support operations at Grey County in 2026 and in 2027.

In developing a budget for 2026 and 2027, staff review past service delivery, existing approved master plans, strategies, the corporate strategic plan and directions of Council to seek balance between the needs of the community with costs. The budget responds to Council direction by seeking to maintain service levels to the community and enhancing and reducing these where Council has provided direction to do so. Staff also review how the County is responding to the growth in community and the impacts that has on the existing resources of the County to be able to maintain service levels.

As a result of this review, staff are proposing that four additional full time staff roles are required in 2026 supported by two new student roles. Staff have considered potential needs in 2027 and have proposed four new full-time roles in 2027, supported by an additional two student positions. All proposals for 2027 are subject to extensive further review and will be considered during the 2027 budget process.

Background and Discussion

Staffing pressures are driven by a variety of factors and have been categorized accordingly in this report;

Growth Related Pressures.

The County continues to experience growth in community. As more people call Grey County home, as new roads are built and as communities expand, the need to deliver existing services to new residents without reducing the service level to existing residents drives service pressures. Over time, these growth pressures result in the need for new staff to meet a growing community's needs.

Strategic Plan Delivery.

The County has an approved strategic plan, Working Together for Success, that articulates a strategic vision for the County. This plan informs, and is informed by, a wide variety of strategies, master plans and other guiding frameworks. These are Council approved plans that seek to provide direction on service delivery across Grey – where new services are needed, where existing services need to be scaled up, or reduced.

Continuous Improvement.

Over time, the way in which work is completed changes and evolves. The requirements of other levels of government with whom the County works, change. Staff continuously seek to improve the ways in which we work, seeking to make efficiencies in work processes in response to these changes.

<u>2026 Staffing Needs</u>

Staff across Grey County have reviewed operational pressures caused by Growth, Strategic Plan delivery and the need for Continuous improvement to inform if and where new staff are required in 2026. These needs have been reviewed by the senior management team and prioritized. The cost of wages and benefits is shown separately from non-payroll costs (these costs include uniforms, boot allowance, computer purchase, other equipment, training, professional development, cellphones etc.).

Growth Related Staffing Pressures

a) **Duty Supervisor (Float) – Paramedic Services**

The ORH Deployment Review indicated the need for expansion of paramedic services to continue to be able to meet established service levels across Grey County as its population grew. The expansion of 911 paramedic services includes the addition of new bases and additional staff and shifts to provide expanded services to support community with reliable and prompt services. In late 2025, the Durham base will be opened, and work is underway in initiating development in Feversham. New vehicles are on order and the paramedic team is growing with approximately 15 new staff in 2025, and additional staff scheduled in 2026 and 2027 to meet the requirements of the planned growth of the paramedic services. In 2025 to date, call volume is up by almost 10% and the paramedic service continues to experience pressures related to growth in demand.

Paramedic Services relies on its team of supervisors to provide on the ground support to 911 Paramedics on a daily basis. These supervisors play an active role in supporting staff teams, ensuring shift vacancies are filled and in deploying crews and equipment across Grey County. Two supervisors work day shifts and a third provides night shift coverage 7 days a week. A team of six non-union supervisors provide this coverage.

Resulting from several pressures including supporting vacation leave, medical and sick absences, training requirements and other pressures, currently 6,000 hours (lost time) of supervisor shift are unable to be filled by the existing supervisory complement. These hours are backfilled by union paramedics who step into supervisory roles on a shift-by-shift basis, receiving a premium for doing so.

In response to this pressure and the growth in both the demand for services and the ongoing expansion of 911 paramedic services in Grey, the need for a seventh Duty Supervisor has been identified. This addition is supported by the ORH Deployment Review. This position will be added as a Float position, meaning that the supervisory resource will be deployed as needed across Grey providing coverage for lost time in the supervisory pool.

Budget Summary:

Salary & Benefits Cost	$163,900
Non Payroll Costs	$5,400
Savings in Lost Time	($100,200)
Net Cost	$69,100
Less 50% Provincial Funding / Reserve Funding	$34,600

2026 Net Levy	$34,500

The addition of this position has a $163,900 impact to the budget. However, it is anticipated that through a reduction in overtime incurred in backfilling vacant supervisory shifts and provincial rebates supporting the role, the net levy impact will be just $34,500. It is considered likely that this position can be engaged with immediate effect in 2026 with conversion of an existing temporary contract role, and so the budget impact is felt fully in 2026.

b) **Mechanic**

Grey County has a small team (1 supervisor, 2 shop supervisors, 3 mechanics and an apprentice) that provides support to a growing number of pieces of fleet and equipment. Grey County runs a fleet of 23 tandem trucks, 30 pickup trucks and 26 pieces of heavy equipment.

In addition, Grey County fleet team provides support for Ambulances, Paramedic Supervisor Trucks, Community Paramedic vehicles and First Response vehicles. This fleet is growing; from 23 units in 2023, to 28 in 2025 and by 2027, 30 units. Alongside of these units, Fleet looks after and services the Powerload stretchers relied on by paramedic services. Ambulances alone require 6 – 10 inspections annually; with 19 in the fleet currently, this results in 200+ inspections a year. In addition to the Grey County ambulances, the team supports the Brightshores patient transport vehicles, of which there are 6.

This results in a workload which is causing pressures across the team; a shift to increasingly reactive maintenance with a drop in preventative maintenance, delays in repairs leading to increased downtime of vehicles and equipment, and the mechanics team are seeing increased overtime work. This is compounded as the team is facing burnout, reflected in a higher number (compared to the Transportation departmental averages) of sick days across the team.

A full-time mechanic is proposed to be added to the team in 2026 to help alleviate these pressures and respond to the growth in the fleet. By growing the team, it is hoped that delays will be reduced, a renewed focus on preventative maintenance cycles and reduced reactive repairs and an overall improvement in employee morale will mitigate pressures the team faces today. This will have a budget impact of approximately $118,900.

Budget Summary:

Salary & Benefits Cost (April 2026 start)	$84,700
Non Payroll Costs	$4,500
Net Levy 2026	$89,200
Annual Cost 2027	$118,900
Levy Increase Required 2027	$29,700

It is hoped that the addition of a mechanic will reduce reliance on overtime and contribute to a more manageable workload across the team resulting in fewer sick days; however, these costs are unable to be budgeted for as an offset. Further, Transportation Services will be adjusting its charge out rates for Paramedic and Brightshores vehicles to increase revenue to help offset these increases.

It is noted that a second mechanic is proposed to be added in 2027 to support the continued growth in fleet and this will be reviewed further in 2026 following on-boarding of the additional proposed mechanic in 2026. If this role is engaged, it has an additional impact of $92,400 in 2027.

c) **Law Clerk**

Grey County has a small legal team consisting of two staff, a Solicitor and a Law Clerk/Real Estate Coordinator. This team handles review of documents, agreements and transfers, and supports delivery of many hundreds of agreements for funding each year as well as handling a substantial degree of legal files for the corporation. The team is involved in all transactions of lands, supports bylaw and policy development, handles claims, and undertakes provincial offence prosecution for the County. Over recent years, as the work of the county continues to evolve, grow and change, the pressures the team faces have also increased.

The County is undertaking several complex projects that require legal support including the road transfers project which consists of many hundreds of property searches, title reviews and transfers. Further, the County is seeking to transfer lands in several areas and secure lands for development of projects such as the Feversham paramedic base and future paramedic bases in Ayton, Thornbury and Cobble Beach. As the County funding comes from an ever-increasing number of sources including provincial and federal grants, legals review of funding agreements is also an area of growth.

These pressures have resulted in delays in reviews with the legal team frequently requiring three months or more to allocate time to review of new agreements. This has a significant impact on the rest of the corporation and leads to mounting pressure, frustration and delays.

The County relies on external legal counsel to support many projects which are beyond the capacity of the in-house legal team and, as some work is non-predictable in nature and inconsistent, reliance on external legal resources continues to be a key resource for the county. However, external legal fees are high, and with sustained projects, such as the road transfers work, it is felt that in house support for these projects will be more cost efficient and deliver a better service.

As such, it is proposed to add a new Law Clerk to the team in 2026, to provide for capacity for the Real Estate Coordinator to be able to focus on real estate projects with a critical focus on the Road Transfers project.

It is anticipated that the costs for this position will be approximately $120,000 per year, inclusive of benefits, etc.

Budget Summary:

Salary & Benefits Cost (April 2026 start)	$89,200
Non Payroll Costs	$2,000
Net Levy 2026	$91,200
Annual Cost 2027	$126,600
Levy Increase Required 2027	$35,400

Strategic Project Delivery

d) **Climate Change Coordinator**

Going Green in Grey is Grey County's Climate Action Plan and was approved by Council in 2022 following more than two years of work across community. To support the delivery of this plan, Council supported in 2023, three staff positions – a Manager of Climate Initiatives, and two Climate Change Coordinator positions, one focused on outreach and a second focused on Data and Energy. One of the two Coordinator roles was approved as a contract.

This team of three was established to support the internal identification, coordination and implementation of work to help the County toward meeting the goals of the climate action plan as well as to work with member municipalities, community groups and other stakeholders in the delivery of broader, community wide strategies to reduce climate change impacts.

The team has been successful over past years, not only in supporting projects and work to reduce climate impacts, but in identification and successful application to a number of external grant funds to support the teams work. Most notably, the ChargeON EV charging program, Future Ready work and Climate Resilience work have drawn significant external funds toward their delivery.

The Future Ready work and Climate Resilience and Adaptation work are larger projects related to delivery of key objectives in Going Green In Grey, and these larger projects are being supported by dedicated external funds and staff resources.

During budget deliberations in 2024, the full-time coordinator position was reduced to a contract position.

Currently, neither coordinator position is filled with the team supported only by the Manager. Funding associated with the contracts is largely spent. This has had significant impacts on the County's ability to deliver on Going Green in Grey and work is increasingly having to be deferred, delayed and stopped.

At this time, key areas of work identified and initiated under Going Green in Grey are paused including;

- Work on developing a corporate wide energy management information system
- IESO Strategic Energy Management programs
- Net-Zero Buildings plan
- Ability to advise on capital projects and available incentives to support
- Community outreach including support for YCAF, YCAC Transform the Lawn, the Climate Change newsletter and website updates
- Public sector Community of Practice
- GHG inventory work
- Climate Action Plan update

Once funding for Resilient Grey and Future Ready work is fully spent, there is no capacity to sustain projects coming from these currently.

In order to address this, staff are requesting that the full time, permanent Climate Change Coordinator role be reinstated. This role will focus on maintaining community outreach efforts, on data collection, and on seeking to restart critical work on data collection and energy management across the corporation. Addition of a permanent position will allow the Climate Change team to re-evaluate Going Green in Grey and ensure that organization resources are aligned toward delivery of this plan.

The anticipated budget impact is approximately $120,000, inclusive of benefits, etc.

Budget Summary:

Salary & Benefits Cost (April 2026 start)	$85,800
Non Payroll Costs	$6,500
Net Levy 2026	$92,300
Annual Cost 2027	$118,600
Levy Increase Required 2027	$26,300

Students

Working Together for Success, Grey County's strategic plan, highlights the importance of succession planning and support for helping to build a strong and sustainable municipal staff pool. Key within this is attracting new talent to the municipal sector and one way this can be achieved is through supporting student positions. There are many positions supported across the corporation, and it is hoped to add to this pool in 2026.

Student – Clerks Department

The work in legislative services includes support and administration for Council and committees, managing bylaws and documents, emergency management, claims handling, accessibility, records management, and access to information. The County's electronic document and records management system has been adopted and work is ongoing to improve handling of records, reducing manual records management processes, and importing, organizing and classifying documents. The addition of a student to help support this work over summer 2026 is considered to be both valuable from an experiential perspective as well as helping further support all departments with their records management needs.

Student – Long Term Care

Long Term Care is a highly regulated service and homes are required to report statistical information to the province on a routine basis. This includes tracking initiatives across 23 separate program areas such as skin and wound care, fall prevention etc. Currently, each home records and tracks this information in slightly different ways and formats. It is anticipated that through the addition of a student position in 2026, working with IT, a data framework for consistent, timely and accurate reporting can be created.

It is anticipated that the total cost associated with two students is $32,400.

2027

Grey County undertakes a 2-year operating budget process that proposes a next year operating budget and a year following anticipated budget. Staff have attempted to predict pressures existing and new, that may drive additional staffing impacts in 2027. It should be stressed that these staffing requests are subject to significant additional review and will only be advanced in the 2027 budget if additional work supports their inclusion.

Growth Related Staffing Pressures

a) Mechanic:

Given the continued growth in fleet and equipment predicted, it is anticipated that a second new mechanic will be required. With the addition of a mechanic in 2026, staff will work with the team to review whether the second anticipated mechanic need can be deferred during 2026.

Budget Summary:

Salary & Benefits Cost (April 2027 start)	$87,900
Non Payroll Costs	$4,500
Net Cost (75% in 2027)	$92,400

b) Facilities Management:

The County operates a growing portfolio of building and facilities; almost 1000 units of housing, three long term care facilities, four operation bases and a growing portfolio of ambulance bases and stations, in addition to the Administrative offices, Grey Roots Museum and Sydenham Campus. The need for effective management of these facilities internally and externally through contracted services is critical and complex. Currently each facility is managed by staff at the facility with each building managed by the service users that utilize the building. Through a LEAN review completed in 2024 and early 2025, significant potential efficiencies were identified through a more coordinated approach to building and facility management. The addition, in 2025, of a Senior Manager Facilities and Operations has started to plan to implement some of the efficiency identified within the LEAN review. Through 2026, a more strategic approach to building and facility management will be considered toward potentially developing a dedicated Facilities Management Team, realigning and coordinating existing resources across the corporation. To support and lead this potential new department, a new senior management position may be required.

Salary & Benefits Cost (April 2027 start)	$120,100
Non Payroll Costs	$4,300

Net Cost (75% impact in 2027)	$124,400

Strategic Project Delivery

c) Performance and Culture:

Performance and Culture are key priorities within Working Together for Success, Grey County's Strategic Plan. Further, collaborative work across and between member municipalities on staff attraction, retention and skills development are likewise, priorities within this plan. In 2025, a Joint Municipal Services committee was struck and while it is yet in its infancy, the committee re-highlighted the challenges that Grey and its member municipalities face in talent acquisition, retention and growth. As during the strategic plan discussions, Grey and member municipalities recognize that growth opportunities may not be able to be supported at one member municipality, but that retaining municipal talent within Grey as a whole is advantageous to all.

Additionally, in 2025 Grey County undertook its Employee Engagement Survey. This is the first step in a journey that seeks to identify ways in which Grey fosters a culture that make staff feel engaged at work. Engagement is linked to higher satisfaction, greater workplace happiness which leads to greater retention rates and high productivity. Seeking to prioritize performance and culture in Grey, and providing support to member municipalities to achieve the same, is a potential role for Grey County in coming years.

Budget Summary:

Salary & Benefits Cost (April 2027 start)	$120,100
Non Payroll Costs	$6,000
Net Cost (75% impact in 2027)	$126,100

Continuous Improvement

d) Business Analyst – Data Analyst

The need for smart business decisions that are based on data is understood. Within individual teams and departments, collating data for asset management planning, operational efficiency, and reporting against grant outcomes is commonplace. Currently this work is fragmented, lack cohesion, may duplicate efforts and may rely on out-of-date systems and data. Often, it is a 'side of the desk' project with limited dedicated expertise.

Grey County itself generates a large volume of data. An organization can leverage its data to make informed decisions about policies, programs, and services. Careful assessment of data can help ensure services are optimized and efficient, that programs are achieving their intended goals, and that processes adapt to changing technology or demographics. Data analysis offers both the insight into processes that allows them to be optimized, and the evidence required to prove changes, services, and new program effectiveness.

To maximize the value of data, significant foundational work is required to maintain clean, secure, reliable and up to date data. Ensuring consistent standards in data management can help with reporting against mandated service levels and leveraging data gathered across the corporation in new ways. To address this emerging and growing need, it is proposed that a Business/Data Analyst be considered as part of the 2027 budget to help strengthen and coordinate data needs across the County.

Budget Summary:

Salary & Benefits Cost (April 2027 start)	$101,900
Non Payroll Costs	$5,200
Net Cost (75% impact in 2027)	$107,100

Students

Two student roles are requested in 2027. One of these students would be allocated to the Communications Team to support work across 2027, which will include marking the 175th Anniversary of Grey County. The second is allocated to Finance to support transition of financial systems to a new platform.

Estimated 2027 impact: $32,800.

Financial and Resource Implications

In 2026:

Position	**Levy Impact in 2026**	**Levy Impact in 2027**
Paramedic Supervisor	$34,600	$3,900
Mechanic	$89,200	$29,700
Law Clerk	$91,200	$35,400
Coordinator, Climate & Environment	$92,300	$26,300
2 Students (Clerks/LTC)	$32,400	$400
Total 2026 Impact	$339,700	
Total 2027 Impact		$95,700

In 2027:

Position	**Levy Impact in 2027**
Mechanic	$92,400
Facilities Management	$124,400
People and Culture	$126,100
Business Analyst	$107,100
Students (Communications/Finance)	$32,800
Total 2027 Impact	$482,800

These costs will be included within the 2026 and (forecast) 2027 budget for consideration by Council.

Relevant Consultation

☒ Internal (list)

- ☐ AODA Compliance (describe)
- ☒ Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets – the inclusion of a Coordinator position within the Climate and Environmental Initiatives team is fundamentally linked to delivery of Going Green In Grey as articulated in this report

☐ External (list)

Appendices and Attachments

None.