

April 20, 2022

Today, April 20th, Zorra Council formally adopted the tax rates which, combined with the public meeting on April 6, finalizes the 2022 tax bills.

A residential single-family house assessed at \$281,000 (I know, no such thing, but that number is based on the years old MPAC number since they froze assessment) will see an increase of 3.35% or \$101.73, and farmland assessed at \$1,521,265 will see an increase of 3.28% or \$119.90 to their tax bill. This is well below the annual inflation rate of 5.7%. This means that over the last four years (with the exception of the 2019 Zorra budget 1.6% vs 1.5%) the annual tax % increase has been less than inflation every year at both Zorra and Oxford Councils.

Details:

With a levy requirement of \$9,571,319; an increase of 7.21% over 2021, in tax levy dollars for Township purposes only.

Oxford County set the same tax ratios as in 2021.

The Education Tax Rates set by the Province of Ontario will remain unchanged from 2021, and the MPAC assessments have been frozen again this year by the Province. The increase in growth assessment will see an increase of \$1,007,675.46 of tax revenue generated in 2022.

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When the Thames Valley District School Board Trustees killed the Rural Education Task Force they made it clear they did not want to hear from the hundreds of residents that were consulted in preparing that report. I will be making a delegation to the April 26 TVDSB Board meeting. But we've crossed a bridge, and there's no going back. I don't think we can pretend that the current governance model of the TVDSB works for us. Rural communities simply asked to be listened to. We followed all the TVDSB policies and procedures and they silenced rural communities.

The Province collects taxes, they determine the funding for the school boards, negotiate the contracts with teachers, they set the curriculum. So what are we getting from school boards? In theory its local representation, but the experience of people in this board, certainly in rural areas is we don't get that. So what if we wiped out school boards and gave the school properties to municipalities? The Ministry of Education could send the same funding as today to municipalities who would look after the schools and transit. More transparent, more accountable, more local decision making.

I committed to action before this, so I'm following through (unlike the TVDSB). I am making a formal complaint to ask for an investigator under the provisions of the Education Act, and that the investigation consider that the governance problems are at least partially due to size and the irreconcilably different needs of the Counties and the City of London,



and that the vote of the Trustees on the Rural Education Task Force is strongly indicative of that. Therefore I will also be asking that the TVDSB should be divided.

I also have had discussions with several Provincial candidates, current MPPs, including Ministers and Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman, asking them “Will you support local pilot projects of alternate decision. making models that put local decision making back into our communities?” There is a Provincial election on, and I encourage you to ask all candidates the same question.

Many people in Zorra/Oxford have been disturbed by what they've seen in Ukraine and are looking for ways to help. I was contacted by several Zorra residents who are trying to help by hosting refugees. Both the refugees and hosts will need help, so they have started a Facebook page to follow along and see if it's for you: “Oxford County Helps Ukraine”. I cannot say enough about people willing to host refugees in their home. #slavaukraini #doingtheirpart

As always, please feel free to contact me on any issue:

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