

Welcome to our 2025 Yearend update. There are a number of issues affecting Bayfield and your BRA is actively monitoring and working to represent your interests.

2026 BUDGET

The 2026 Budget was passed by council, resulting in our Bluewater 2026 property taxes increasing by 3.17%.

2026 Net Operating Budget

	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	Budget Change	
Municipal Levy	\$8,880,273	\$9,591,339	\$711,066	8.01%
OPP Levy	\$1,782,914	\$1,526,209	(\$256,705)	-14.40%
	\$10,663,187	\$11,117,548	\$454,361	4.26%
Assessment Growth			(\$116,346)	-1.09%
Operating Budget Increase After Growth			\$338,015	3.17%

This will result in an estimated increase of Bluewater taxes for common properties of:

- \$46 per year for an average single family home, based on average value of \$269,000.
- \$66 per year for a seasonal recreational dwelling, based on average value of \$387,000.
- \$27 per year for small retail commercial properties, based on average value of \$142,000
- \$53 per year for farm land based on average value of \$1,234,800.

The Top allocations in the \$11,117,548 Operating Budget were:

- Roads and Bridges Consolidated – \$ 4,060,224
- Fire Department - \$1,493,571
- Facilities including parks and programs - \$2,331,840

One-Time Revenues Utilized

In order to lessen the impact of the property tax levy on residents for 2026, staff have made use of several one-time sources, including Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Surplus rebate allocations and Reserve funds totaling \$976,435.86 or 9.16%. These funds are temporary in nature and will not be available for use in the 2027 budget or in any future years. As a result, it should be anticipated that, **before any**

new initiatives or cost increases are considered, approximately 9.16% more in levy funding will be required to maintain existing service levels at the start of the 2027 budget process.

2026 Capital Budget Summary

Tax Levy Supported	Approved Budget	Grants	Debt	Vibrancy	Reserve Fund	Total Funding
General Government	35,000				35,000	35,000
Fire	1,495,000				1,495,000	1,495,000
Roads	1,153,000	372,500			780,500	1,153,000
Fleet	1,262,500	25,000		635,000	602,500	1,262,500
Landfill	250,000				250,000	440,000
Facilities and Parks	517,419	8,000		30,000	479,419	517,419
Streetlights						
Total Tax Levy Capital Request	4,712,919	405,500		665,000	3,642,419	4,712,919
User Fee Supported						
Water	260,000				260,000	260,000
Sewer	292,000				292,000	292,000
Total User Fee Supported	522,000				522,000	522,000
Combined 2026 Capital Request	5,264,919	405,500		655,000	4,194,419	5,264,919

MUNICIPAL SPENDING CONCERNS

The BRA observes all council meetings, follows Council activities, lobbies issues on behalf of our community where appropriate and monitors what is considered wasteful spending. An example from fiscal year 2025 is:

1. Against the advice of the Fire Chief, the Bluewater Council voted to attempt to improve the performance of a pump, on a firetruck that is to be replaced in the next couple of years, at an estimated cost of \$30,000. The Chief said the truck engine could be run at higher rpms to achieve the necessary pressure..

MILL STREET HIGHWAY 21 INTERSECTION

The BRA and its residents are very concerned about the dangerous intersection at the corner of Highway 21/ Mill Road and Cameron Street. On June 25, 2025 a pick-up truck and a motorcycle led to the closure of Highway 21 for hours and resulted in a life threatening injury. On July 28, 2025 another serious multi-vehicle accident occurred involving Bayfield residents resulting in hospitalization and lengthy recoveries.

Local council passed a motion in February, 2022 requesting MTO to investigate the intersection due to safety and congestion issues. As a result of further requests, MTO completed a study this past November 2025.

MTO is now saying they will be awarding an assignment for detailed design on the intersection improvements and a crosswalk across from Glen Gregor Square. It is currently believed MTO's recommendation is to add two left turn lanes on Highway 21 and add stop lights to the Mill Street / 21 interchange. MTO has agreed there will be a notice of project update letter with proposed detailed design sent to emergency services, property owners, businesses and the municipality. As part of the notice they will be accepting feedback on the proposed design.

MTO has indicated that these changes will occur in 2026.

To strengthen the community's collective voices, the BRA is initiating the Bayfield Safety Focus Group. The mandate for the group will be to:

- Raise public awareness
- Gather community insights
- Advocate with the municipality, county, and MTO for meaningful and lasting safety improvements

If you are interested in participating, please contact Anette Christensen Kalm at: achristensenkalm@gmail.com, representative of the Bayfield Ratepayers Association.

COMMUNITY CENTRE EXPANSION

The BFIT Private, Public Partnership with the Municipality has been extended for 10 years. As part of this Private, Public Partnership (PPP) between the Municipality and BFIT, BFIT is required to develop a plan for expanding the existing community centre.

A committee has been formed which includes the BRA, Bayfield Lions, BFIT and the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce. At this point, the committee has developed initial draft designs based on the results of the needs survey run in the Bayfield Breeze in late 2024 and secured potential donations for a large percentage of the proposed build. Before the project can proceed there are a number of steps required including conducting public review sessions of the plan, obtaining Council support for the plan, securing land for the expansion, applying for grants and running a fundraising campaign for remaining required funds

At this stage , the committee has been advised that the Bayfield Agricultural Society is not currently prepared to consider the use of a small portion of land adjacent to the arena for the proposed community centre expansion. On November 17th the Agricultural Society Board passed a motion that a representative of the Bayfield Agricultural Society will attend one planning committee meeting only, and that the Agricultural Society will not accept any future plans of a new community centre involving a request of land from the Agricultural Park.

While the committee and the Municipality are very disappointed in the Agricultural Society's decision, they believe there remains an opportunity for collaborative leadership that reflects the shared responsibility all community organizations have in supporting Bayfield's future growth and well-being.

The proposed expansion of the community centre is intended to benefit residents of all ages and community groups, now and for generations to come. A solution that supports this goal would align with the Agricultural Society's mandate as a community-focused organization and reinforce its valued role as a steward of land that has long been integral to Bayfield's public life.

The committee and the Municipality of Bluewater remain hopeful that a mutually beneficial path forward can be found in the best interest of the entire Bayfield community.

MILL STREET POWER GENERATION PROJECT

Blue Water Generation Inc. has proposed and received municipal approval to proceed to submission to IESO for approval to build up to four small power generating stations using natural gas powered reciprocating engines. These will be installed in weatherproof enclosures with noise abatement equipment. These stations would be located on a farmer's property on Mill Road just west of Goshen Line. They would provide power to the electrical grid when usage is high and there is a demand for more power. Council has approved up to four stations based on the commitment that the farmer is in agreement with having them on their property and they will meet all provincial noise and emission standards. The noise level is reported to be equivalent to a lawn mower.

Any expansion to additional units will require further Council approval.

BAYFIELD SEWER CAPACITY EXPANSION

The Municipality of Bluewater is currently undertaking an expansion to the Bayfield Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project is projected to be completed by June 2026, subject to weather. The expanded capacity will allow for adding up to 502 new homes to the waste water system. Currently there are 80-90 existing homes/lots waiting to be hooked up to the sewer. The remainder of the 502 would be available for new homes to be approved within the Bayfield Settlement Area.

It is proposed that as of January 5, 2026, planning applications for new development be processed by the Municipality with the understanding that the expanded plant will not be fully operational until the projected date of June, 2026. It is anticipated that initial approvals will be given to existing properties in Bayfield needing sewer hookup. Additional development will be subject to the Bayfield Secondary plan.

SHORT TERM RENTALS (STR)

149 short-term rental applications have been received in 2025 with 3 applications rejected. 105 short-term rental licenses have been issued in 2025.

The revenue from STR licensing fees is decreasing from \$143,325 in 2024 to \$128,250 by October 28, 2025, versus a 2025 budget of \$160,000.

It is not clear why the number of STRs is going down. It could be that people who were only renting a few times a year are not applying, or with the licensing fees people are no longer interested in having an STR

It could be coincidence that the municipality is no longer running the scouring software suggesting that perhaps people are no longer applying in hope to not get caught? Those that choose to not apply are only hurting those that follow the bylaw who “may” end up paying more as it is a full cost recovery program. We encourage the Municipality to start using the scouring software again to see to ensure all STRs are licensed.

We welcome your ideas by replying to this newsletter.

We would like to thank all of our members for their ongoing support. **If you have not paid your 2025 membership dues, please pay your dues by etransferring \$20 to bayfieldratepayers@gmail.com.**

We wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a great 2026 and look forward to representing your interests on issues impacting Bayfield in 2026.

If you are not already a BRA member, we encourage you to join. Please see our website at www.bayfieldratepayers.ca and become part of supporting how your tax dollars are spent.

Board of Directors

Bayfield Ratepayers Association