

## Bylaw for Real Fiscal Responsibility and Transparent Governance

Good evening, Mayor and Members of Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

I'm here as a resident and taxpayer to propose something I believe is simple, clear, and—frankly—long overdue: a bylaw that requires any additional funding requests made after the formal budget is passed to be matched by real-time, equivalent cutbacks elsewhere in the budget—not by dipping into reserves.

Let me explain why this matters so much to me—and why I believe it's essential for responsible, transparent governance.

We've all seen it happen. A department—whether it's Transportation, Parks and Recreation, or another—comes to Council midway through the year asking for more money. Maybe it's for repairs, temporary staff, or a project that didn't make it into the original budget.

Now, I understand these requests often come with good intentions. But here's the problem:

When Council approves these additional funds without making offsetting cuts, you usually pull from one place—our reserves.

That may seem harmless in the moment, but over time, it creates a serious problem. Every time you do this, you bypass the hard work of the formal budget process. You avoid making trade-offs. You spend money that was meant for long-term priorities or true emergencies.

What I'm asking this Council to consider is a Fiscal Offset Bylaw—a simple but powerful tool that would require departments to find matching savings for any mid-year budget request. In other words: if a department wants \$60,000 more, then Council must identify \$60,000 in savings—whether that's deferring a non-urgent project, pausing a program, or scaling

back elsewhere.

And unless we're dealing with a formally declared emergency, reserves should not be touched. That's money we all rely on for real crises or long-term infrastructure—not everyday overspending.

This bylaw would embed three things into our financial DNA:

1      Fiscal Responsibility We commit to living within our means—just like every family and business is expected to do.

2      Transparency Residents will see the true cost of new spending. If something new is added, we'll also see what's being traded off.

3      Accountability Departments will have an incentive to plan more carefully, and Council will be encouraged to weigh the real consequences of mid-year spending.

This bylaw won't stop emergencies from being addressed—but it will make sure the term “emergency” actually means something. A real emergency—like a natural disaster or a sudden infrastructure failure—can still trigger access to emergency reserves. But that should be the exception, not the rule.

Let's be honest: this bylaw won't always be convenient. It will force tougher conversations. It may mean saying “no” more often. But isn't that what leadership is?

By approving this bylaw, Council would be sending a strong signal to every department and every resident: that our budget is not just a formality passed in January—it's a commitment that lasts the full year.

Here's what I'm asking Council to do:

Draft, debate, and pass a fiscal offset bylaw that says:

No department shall receive unbudgeted funds during the fiscal year unless equal value in services are cut elsewhere. And no additional funds shall be drawn from reserves unless a formal emergency has been declared.

Let this bylaw be a guardrail—a shield for our reserves, a

benchmark for good governance, and a promise to taxpayers like me that our money will not be spent carelessly or without consequence.

Thank you for your time—and I urge you to take this proposal seriously. The long-term health of our township depends on it.