



160 Livingston Avenue,  
Grimsby, ON,  
L3M 4G3

August 10, 2022

# Grimsby DIA Historic Budget Report January 2019-Present

Members of Grimsby council,

It is my understanding after a discussion with staff in Town of Grimsby's finance department, at its Aug. 2, 2022 Grimsby council meeting, some members of council voiced concerns about the Grimsby DIA's budget – in particular questions arose regarding the DIA reserves.

This is very odd in that – at many, many points over the last 3.5 years detailed explanations and varying contributing issues have been included in the DIA meeting minutes which have all be submitted to and approved by the same councillors who seem not to know what is happening. It is also odd that some members of council do not know what a DIA is how it operates. It even had to be noted to staff that the DIA is not a department of the Town of Grimsby. As always, the Board's door is always open. Anyone with concerns can speak to anyone of the board members and get a full and detailed update on the new events we have created - Comedy Night in Grimsby, Shopping Spree Campaign, Christmas Moonlight Madness event and the upcoming Grimsby Arts Walk as examples.

This summary of excerpts below from just a few meeting minutes - which are all on record at Town Hall and on the grimsby.ca via agendas - may help shed the light of information and facts for the concerned councillors.

After the dust had barely settled after the new board was installed in early 2019, the first of many discussions regarding the pending work of updating water and sewer lines along Main Street was reviewed by the board.

## **October 2, 2019 Minutes**

- *Town of Grimsby director of finance Steven Gruninger attended to give a financial overview of 2019 and answer any questions regarding 2020 budget. Mr. Gruninger suggested the board roll any 2019 surplus into rebuilding its reserves as reserves were exhausted by the previous board.*

## **November 27, 2019 Minutes**

- *Mike noted for all again the proposal at Niagara Region to excavate much of downtown's streets including Main Street and Elm Street in 2022 or 2023. Jeff noted he would request Region not schedule anything for Grimsby's 100th anniversary.*

*The work will have a major impact on downtown and the board will be setting aside reserves in 2020 and beyond in anticipation of needing additional marketing resources over that construction period.*

## **March 31, 2021 – Special GDIA update for Grimsby Council**

This two-page report was submitted to council after Coun. John Dunstall inquired about reserves 18 months ago and suggested a PT administrator be hired by the DIA. Board President Mike provided the following details to all of council at that time:

*“3) Part-time administrator - this also ties into Coun. Dunstall’s question about DIA reserves. Since the board made a change in its structure, I have taken on the majority of administrative duties. It has been a lot of work, but I don’t mind. My main reason for doing so is to allow the board to build up its reserves which, as noted by the director of finance, had bottomed out:*

*“At the end of 2018 the DIA had about \$4,500 in reserves. When the new board took over in 2019 they made an effort to increase the amount in reserves by cutting costs and using the savings to increase the reserves. In just two years the DIA Reserve has grown to approximately \$70,000 with an additional contribution of about \$14,000 in 2021.” - from an email last week from Steven Gruninger, director of finance, to confirm numbers.”*

The report further stated:

*“It is also important to note, Coun. Dunstall is in his 7th year as an elected official. He would know all DIA finances run through the Town Hall. The director of finance was on Monday’s Zoom meeting, so he could certainly have asked a question of Mr. Gruninger at the time as our financial information is always up to date. Mr. Gruninger - who I understand is no longer an employee of the Town - was a walking encyclopedia of information and had been an invaluable resource for the DIA over the years, so I if I don’t have the information any councillor may require, I am sure Mr. Gruninger would have, or someone in Finance.”*

These few items going back to the early months of the board’s first year and closer to the present are just a few of the references from ongoing discussions of the main reason the board planned to stockpile a reserve – the pending Main Street construction which was initially planned for 2022, but was delayed.

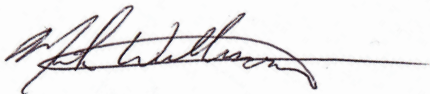
I will point out, but it due to the painfully obvious nature of the information it seems odd to have to mention, but for large stretches of time over 2020 and 2021 NO community events, gatherings or promotions could be planned to various COVID restrictions. For example, the cancellation of Happening in Grimsby alone dropped \$10,000 right into that year’s reserves as it was a budget item which did not take place.

The Board had great success with creating new events and promotions when social circumstances allowed. As noted, when a call of inquiry came from the finance department last week, the key reasons for the reserve build-up is to allow for significant promotions when problematic circumstances arise due to construction with the two major contributors to input of funds coming from an administrative re-organization where the volunteer board took on many more duties and the planned/budgeted events which did not happen..

I trust this information provides an explanation satisfactory to council.

As always, all members of council are welcome to attend any of our board meetings which are open to the general public at all times. We meet the first Wednesday of each month at 8 a.m. at Woolverton Hall, unless special circumstance necessitates a change of date.

*Thanks for your time,*



**Mike Williscraft**  
**President**  
**Grimsby DIA**

P.S. This report was presented and unanimously approved by the board to submit to Town Council.