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NOTL municipal tax bill is expected to jump about 6.75%

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents can expect a municipal tax hike of about 6.75 per cent for 2024.

The budget debate got heated when NOTL's nine elected officials discussed ways to save money in the 2024 budget.

A proposed hike of 9.88 per cent was slashed twice in two hours before

council on Feb. 29 agreed it was ready to get the seal of approval later in March.

Council decided to transfer more than \$198,000 in reserve funds into the 2024 operating budget.

That shaved 1.32 per cent off the proposed tax increase.

Council found another 1.81 per cent in savings after re-evaluating the proposed salaries for new staff positions.

The new positions, some of which were cut from the 2023 budget, were estimated to cost the town about \$661,000.

Some of the more notable positions include a mechanic, a senior planner and a

climate change co-ordinator.

When Coun. Nick Ruller said some of the staffers likely wouldn't be hired until the year was half done, staff revisited the numbers

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Is it trash or a treasure? Be prepared to toss it

From junk drawers to overstuffed basements, many of us have a lot of "stuff" we no longer need. This four-part series will help you deal with it and maybe give new life to old items.

Denise Ascenzo
The Lake Report

The "death cleaning" we all must face is a daunting task.

Many of us are cavalier about not taking responsibility for our mess and figure our kids can look after it one day.

But is this something you want them to remember you by? Like wills, power-of-attorney papers and other legal documents, looking after our own belongings is the responsible thing to do.

Arlene Stephenson of "Downsizing Divas" sug-

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Shaw lost \$5.7M in 2023

But charitable donations pushed revenue to record \$36.7 million



Despite a record operating deficit in 2023, Shaw Festival executive director Tim Jennings is optimistic about the future. EVAN LOREE

Evan Loree | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

It was a tough fiscal year for the Shaw Festival.

In the face of a rapid drop off in COVID-19 relief funds, inflation, lagging attendance and an expensive slate of productions, the non-profit theatrical

company came out of 2023 a bit worse for wear.

"We lost about \$5.7 million last year," Shaw treasurer Greg Prince told the company's annual general meeting on Friday.

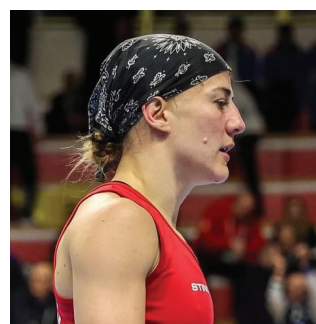
The deficit came despite raking in a record \$36.7 million in revenue.

Attendance was up to about 210,000 from 171,000 in 2022, but was still short of the Shaw's pre-pandemic numbers.

Prince said the Shaw hosted about 267,000 people in 2019.

"Audiences didn't come back as quickly as we thought they would," he said.

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Mckenzie Wright.

One point seals NOTL boxer's fate at Olympic qualifier

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

A single point and a lone judge who saw her bout differently was all it took to derail boxer Mckenzie Wright's latest quest to

compete in the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics.

The St. Davids fighter narrowly lost a qualifying bout to eventual champion Aira Villegas of the Philippines in the 50-kilogram weight class at a tournament

in Italy last Friday.

Wright will now compete in one final tournament in Bangkok, Thailand, in May where she'll battle for a chance to live out her Olympic dream.

While she's disappointed

with the latest result, Wright is pleased with her performance in Busto Arsizio, near Milan.

"The experience of competing at such a high level with everything on the line is the most exciting thing

I will ever do so I am still always appreciating every moment because I know one day I will miss it," she told The Lake Report shortly after returning to Canada on

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NOTL boxer Mckenzie Wright has one more chance to make Olympics

Continued from Front Page

Tuesday evening.

Her match with Villegas “was definitely the highest-calibre fight I’ve been in and it was a war. Unfortunately, it was a clash of styles that caused us to keep tangling where neither one of us was willing to take a step back.”

People watching the fight at home via livestream can’t always see the round-by-round scores, Wright said.

With five judges scoring the match, she took the first and final rounds 3-2 but Villegas won the middle round 4-1.

“It’s hard to explain because the scoring is complicated, but basically it was one judge who gave her both the first and second I needed to flip to give me the third,” she said.

So, although three of the judges gave the Canadian

the last round, “that one judge was not one of them.”

“When you count up the points, it’s a one-point difference and (Villegas) takes the fight. That’s a tough one to accept, knowing that I won two of three rounds.”

Despite the setback, the weeks spent in Italy preparing for the tournament and her performance against Villegas were a confidence boost for Wright.

“Once again I am proving I belong at the highest level of boxing in the world. My opponent went on to win the whole bracket and not only qualified, but did it with ease.”

“Unfortunately, that’s just luck of the draw. I was a huge underdog in the fight, only finding out later she is a world bronze medalist,” Wright said.

“It’s reassuring to know that it was a razor-close

finish with the top level, so I can’t give up. There are four more spots left that someone has to win, so why not me?”

Versus Villegas, she stuck to her game plan and made adjustments to come back and win the third round.

“I implemented a lot of things we had been working on during our three-week camp out there where I was sparring other previous Olympians, world medalists, and other girls who have already qualified their spot for Paris. So, I do know I’m right there with them.”

In that third round, Wright unleashed a flurry of combinations and uppercuts in the final three minutes, rocking her opponent, while Villegas countered with numerous punches that missed or landed lightly.

In the livestreamed match, described by the colour

commentators as “terrifically competitive” with the decision on “a knife’s edge,” Wright put in a strong and gutsy performance.

She appeared to have won the bout, but couldn’t change that lone judge’s opinion.

“I’m also happy with the adversity I was able to overcome and still perform really well,” Wright said.

“Our shuttle to the venue was a 30-minute bus ride and our bus driver found it to be more important to have a leisurely dinner than to leave on time.”

“We left half an hour late and on arrival I found out the fight before mine had been scrapped. I started getting my hands gauzed by my coach as soon as I arrived,” she said. That usually takes 20 minutes.

She managed to do her full warm-up and get fo-



Canadian champ Mckenzie Wright, in red, battles with Aira Villegas of the Philippines in their 50-kg bout in Italy. Wright won two of the three rounds but lost the match by a single point. She will compete in one more tournament in her bid to qualify for the Paris Olympics. SUPPLIED

cused in 10 minutes before walking out to the ring.

“There is always adversity that will come up and performing under non-ideal circumstances at the highest level, you better keep it together. And I’m happy I was able to do just that,” Wright said.

Now that she’s back home,

“I will probably be back in the gym for light training by the end of the week. I’m disappointed but I’m always motivated to keep pushing because I’m so close.”

“I have about six weeks to keep practising the little adjustments I want to make and then I get to do it all again.”

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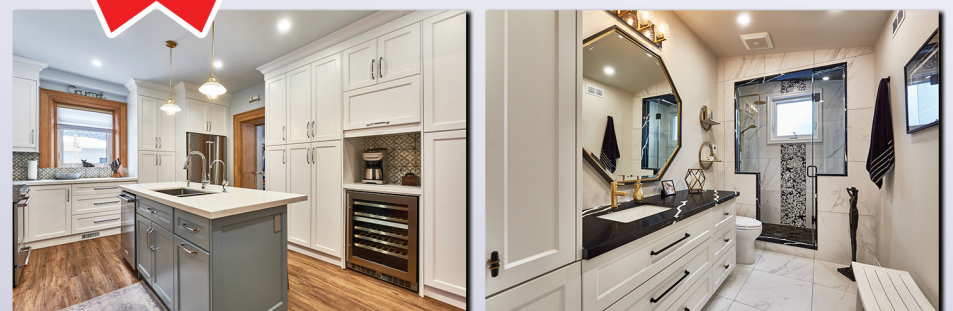


NANCY BAILEY, CIPS • ENGEL & VÖLKERS OAKVILLE
Broker | Private Office Advisor
226 Lakeshore Road East | Oakville | Ontario | L6J 1H8
905-371-4234 | nancy.bailey@evrealstate.com

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