HAWKESBURY – Last week’s $1.1 billion announcement for municipal infrastructure funding from the government of Ontario was a “very nice surprise,” Hawkesbury Mayor Jeanne Charlebois told The Review.

Hawkesbury will get $845,298 to invest in infrastructures of its choice, without having to report to provincial authorities.

This money was absolutely unexpected, Charlebois said.

“We each have our ideas on how to use it, but we are seven at the table,” Charlebois replied when asked how she would use the money.

Charlebois listed road improvements, new paint at the public library and improvements to Confederation Park as some of the needs this money could be used to cover.

According to Charlebois, the unexpected funding would unlikely be used for the wastewater treatment plant overhaul project, since the municipality would probably apply for funding announced in a federal-provincial grant program last week.

Federal Environment Minister John Baird and Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs Jim Watson said they would each pitch in $362 million between 2008 and 2014 for infrastructure projects in municipalities with populations of 100,000 or less.

This represents $724 million from the $6.2 billion from the federal and provincial Infrastructure Framework Agreement for municipalities announced earlier this summer.

The first wave of applications will be accepted this fall. Charlebois said that if her municipality is to apply, council has to decide in September which option to choose for its wastewater treatment plant.

Hawkesbury may choose to increase its actual plant’s capacity, to build a new one on the same site using a part of the existing facility, to build an entirely new plant on a new site or to stick to the status quo.