



Town of Lunenburg Approves 2022/23 Town Budget

April 14, 2022 -- Lunenburg Town Council has approved the 2022/23 Town Operating and Capital Budgets as of the Council Meeting of April 12, 2022.

Mayor Matt Risser commented, “The budget is both a balanced budget and a responsive budget that addresses key strategic priorities and invests in our community and our people.”

The Operating budget totals \$8,697,500 and Capital budget \$13,875,150. There will be no increase to the residential tax rate, which remains at \$1.376 per \$100/assessment. The commercial tax rate returns to the 2019/20 pre-pandemic rate of \$3.358 per \$100/assessment, an increase of \$0.04.

The budget addresses six key themes:

1. **Implementing the Comprehensive Community Plan:** The CCP is the long-term vision for the future of the Town. Included in the budget are priorities identified by our community such as upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and collection/discharge systems. The Town has applied for the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program which if received will fund 73.33% of the \$9.982 million dollar project, with the Town borrowing the remaining \$2,661,900. Sewer rates have been increased by 30% across the board to finance the anticipated debt. This very important infrastructure work will safeguard the ongoing environmental stewardship of the Town.

Also important to the CCP is the expansion of our anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts to achieve a regional approach for all of Lunenburg County. This will see Lunenburg, Bridgewater, the District of Chester, Mahone Bay, and Municipality of the District of Lunenburg working together to bring equity, diversity and inclusion measures to all five municipalities – similar to the joint approach to accessibility.

2. **Planning for the Future:** Lunenburg is planning wisely by conducting studies to set a stable base for future decisions. Initiatives include development of a “disposal of Town assets” policy, a parking study which considers pedestrianization and accessibility, GIS mapping of our underground infrastructure, and accessibility improvements to our recreation facilities.
3. **Building Capacity:** The Town is building capacity in our organization and the first step of this process is an organization review that is currently underway. This wide-ranging review ensures that staff resources collaborate to implement Town priorities. Also to come is a full bylaw and policy assessment, and the

addition of HR support. This work will help the Town administration realign to be a more growth and service-oriented organization.

Other capacity improvements are around equipment, such the tactical replacement of Public Works' aging fleet, and the Fire Department's large rescue truck.

4. **Recovering from COVID-19:** The pandemic may not be over, but Nova Scotia is turning a corner. Lunenburg is investing to get life going again and re-create our community's spirit. We're reinstating the budget for in-person public celebrations. There is funding for low or no-cost recreation opportunities like trails and cricket, as well as the introduction of an online registration system. A tree planting program is planned to improve our urban forest. We want to see our residents out and about and enjoying our beautiful seaside community, and we want to welcome back visitors to all the various galleries, shops, accommodations and restaurants that Lunenburg has to offer.
5. **Responding to Economic Realities:** The economic impact of COVID-19 and other global crises are being felt in Nova Scotia and around the world. The Town is no exception. The same services cost more to provide due to factors like the cost of fuel and supply chain interruptions. One such factor is the expected increase in RCMP cost to the Town, which may be up as much as 20% for federal salary adjustments with no change in service. RCMP and Education transfers together make up 30.9% of the Town's Operating Budget.

Another challenge for property owners is the increase in assessments right across Nova Scotia this year. For this reason, Lunenburg has enhanced the Low Income Property Tax Relief program to ensure that the program is more accessible to property owners that require financial assistance to help offset higher assessments and resulting residential taxes. This is also why there will be no increase to the residential property tax rate this year, and only cost-of-living increases in recreation fees to keep our facilities affordable.

6. **Improving Infrastructure:** Investment in infrastructure improves safety and quality of life. In addition to the wastewater upgrades described above, this budget includes street reconstruction projects on Duke and Prince Streets, the replacement and widening of the Green Street sidewalk, and the new construction of a Tannery Road sidewalk along the sea wall side.

The 2022/23 Town Budget is publicly available for download at the Town website:
<https://townoflunenburg.ca/town-budget-and-tax-rates.html>

For more information, please contact:

Mayor Matt Risser
Town of Lunenburg
902-634-4410, ext. 224
mrissier@townoflunenburg.ca