



MEDIA RELEASE

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RE: Council approves 2022-23 tax rates, operating and capital budgets

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst town council approved the 2022-23 tax rates, operating budgets and capital budgets for the 2022-23 fiscal year when it met on Wednesday, June 8, 2022.

Council set the overall tax rate at \$1.67 per \$100 of assessment for residential and resource properties and \$4.47 per \$100 of assessment for commercial properties. These are unchanged from the previous year.

They also approved a general operating budget of slightly more than \$19 million, a water utility operating budget of slightly more than \$2.4 million and a combined water and general capital budget of slightly more than \$10 million.

“During this inflationary period, the council is pleased that we were able to keep tax rates at last year’s level while preserving all the excellent services we provide to our citizens and continuing to improve our infrastructure,” Mayor David Kogon said. “Our ability to do this is the result of the outstanding efforts by our superb town staff. We appreciate the hard work they do each and every day on behalf of our citizens.”

The overall tax rate consists of three components, the general tax rate, the provincial mandatory contribution area rate and the community support area rate. The general rate was set at \$1.197 per \$100 of assessment for residential and resource properties and \$3.977 per \$100 of assessment for commercial properties.

The community support area rate, which funds grants to organizations, a grant to the Cumberland YMCA, the town’s tax exemption and tax reduction policies and community events, was set at 7.1 cents per \$100 of assessment for all property types. Included in the community support area rate is a \$33,750 grant to Maggie’s Place for the Youth Centre, which is in the second of a four-year commitment, as well as a \$20,000 grant to the Nova Scotia Community College, which is in its fifth and final year.





Earlier this year, council approved a mandatory provincial contribution tax rate of 40.2 cents per \$100 of assessment on all properties. This rate raises the money the town is required to collect on behalf of the province for education, corrections, housing, property valuation services and the regional library.

The general operating budget contains the budgets for corporate services (\$2,787,602), police (\$4,716,495), fire (\$1,946,060), economic development (\$187,073), recreational facilities (\$1,463,870), community well-being (\$445,369), solid waste education and bylaw enforcement (\$404,399), operations (\$2,139,893), planning (\$190,869), strategic priorities (\$280,000), environmental stewardship (\$53,719), sewage (\$1,129,929), solid waste (\$591,795), mandatory provincial support area rate (\$2,244,712) and community support area rate (\$616,478).

The town has budgeted \$100,000 over two years in a partnership with the Municipality of the County Cumberland, pending approval of the county's budget, for a Navigator position. The role of the Navigator will be to enhance local efforts to retain and attract doctors and other medical professionals to the region.

The solid waste uniform charge remains at \$185 per year and the deed transfer tax remains at 1.25 per cent of the property sale price.

Metered sewer rates were set at 99 cents per cubic metre for residential users and 49 cents per cubic metre for commercial users. The sewer base charge, billed quarterly, depends on the size of the meter and ranges from \$18 if you have a 5/8-inch meter to \$500 if you have a four-inch meter. These rates remain unchanged.

For non-metered customers in unmetered mobile parks, council determined park owners will pay a sewer rate of \$178.53 per dwelling unit per annum, which remains unchanged from the prior year.

The council noted the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, effective April 1, 2022, set the unmetered, quarterly water service base charge at \$89.72. For those with meters, the quarterly base rate depends on the size of the meter. It runs from \$36.95 for a 5/8-inch meter to \$3,029.95 for an eight-inch meter. The water consumption rate was set at





82.8 cents per cubic metre. This is the only section of the budgets to see an increase during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

The water department's capital budget was set at slightly more than \$1.7 million, with the largest capital expenditure being \$820,400 to replace the water main on Victoria Street West, between the CNR tracks and Hickman Street.

This project is contingent upon receiving an ICIP Infrastructure Grant from the federal government. Should the grant be received, planning for the project would take place during 2022, with the work being done in 2023.

Another major capital project for the water department is replacing the water main on Beacon Street. Council budgeted \$215,000 for this project.

The general capital budget was set at slightly more than \$8.2 million. It includes \$1.5 million to replace the aging sanitary and storm sewers on Victoria Street West, between the CNR tracks and Hickman Street, as well as rebuilding the street and paving it and installing curbs and sidewalks.

This project is contingent upon receiving an ICIP Infrastructure Grant. Should the grant be received, planning for the project would take place during 2022, with the work being completed in 2023.

Also contingent upon receiving an ICIP Infrastructure Grant is a planned \$720,000 project to replace the sanitary and storm sewers on Russell Street as well as rebuilding the street. Like the Victoria Street West project, the planning will take place in 2022, with the work being done in 2023 if the grant is received.

The town has budgeted \$225,000 to replace the storm and sanitary sewers and install new curbing on Beacon Street, between Croft and Church streets. Another \$210,000 has been budgeted to replace the storm sewer on Boylston Avenue, between Milford Street and Elmwood Drive, as well new curbing and asphalt overlay.

Council budgeted \$513,000 to repave several streets including: Chandler Road, Harding Avenue, McCully Street, between Anson Avenue and the CNR mainline, Brownell Avenue, Dale Street, between Eddy and North Adelaide streets, Rosewood





Drive, between Kimberly Court and Pinehurst Street, Davison Street, between Dickey and Queen streets, and Prince Arthur Street, between Church and Acadia streets.

Another \$128,000 was budgeted for sidewalks including the Dickey Brook Trail, between Donald Avenue and Charles Street, the Willow Street Trail, east to Abbey Road, Albion Street, west side from Clinton Street to Highland Village, and a new sidewalk on Regent Street, between Elmwood Drive and Spring Street.

Approval was also given to purchase a new backhoe at \$198,000 and streetsweeper for \$381,500 (shared between the water and general capital budgets). They will be replacing vehicles that have reached the end of their useful lives.

In addition, council approved spending \$1.6 million on a new ladder truck for the fire department. This will replace a vehicle that has been in service since 1995 and has served five more years than its life expectancy of 20 years.

A \$670,000 project to upgrade the town's LED streetlights was also approved, as was spending \$200,000 to replace the lighting at the Robbs Centennial Complex.

Funding for these capital projects will come from the Canada Community Building Fund (formerly the Gas Tax Fund), long-term borrowing, federal and provincial government grants, the town's water and general operating budgets, the water depreciation fund and reserves.

The water and general capital budgets included slighting more than \$1.4 million in carry-over projects that were approved in previous budget years. Among them is a \$240,000 investment in a wellfield generator, \$175,000 for a new dump truck, \$397,810 for two solar for community building projects and \$200,000 for a new outdoor skating rink.

The tax rates and budgets can be viewed on the town's website at:
<https://amherst.ca/budgets.html>.

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