

Media Release



Imagine that!

March 27, 2019 Council Meeting Summary

For Immediate Release: March 27, 2019

At the special council meeting held this evening, Stratford Town Council passed resolutions to adopt the 2019/20 Town operating and capital budgets and the 2019/20 Utility operating and capital budgets. Before Council passed the 2019/20 budgets, Councillor Gail MacDonald, as Chair of the Finance and Technology Committee, gave a detailed presentation on the budgets to all present which also highlighted the past year. Development in 2018 set a new record in the Town of Stratford at \$72,900,000 which is more than double the previous record set in 2012 of \$30,900,000.

The following are some of the highlights from the budget presentation:

- In the 2019/20 Town of Stratford budget, revenue of \$6,384,700 and expenses of \$6,383,000 is forecast, with a resulting surplus of \$1,700. The majority of the Town's revenue, more than 4.1 million dollars, is derived from property tax with the Municipal Capital Expenditures Grant providing approximately 1.1 million dollars of revenue.
- Stratford has again approved a balanced budget with no increase to municipal tax rates which will remain at \$0.44 per \$100 of assessment for residential properties and \$0.99 per \$100 of assessment for commercial properties. Our municipal tax rate remains among the lowest of fully serviced municipalities in PEI.
- The capital budget includes \$7,294,000 for the construction of the Emergency Services Facility which is now underway and scheduled to open in late summer. The net additional cost, including financing charges, fire dues and operational costs, is approximately \$425,000 per year. As a result, fire dues for dwelling units are increasing from \$68 per dwelling unit to \$105 per dwelling unit and fire dues for commercial units are increasing from \$158 to \$600 per commercial unit per year. The Town will continue to provide fire services inclusive in your municipal property tax so neither residential nor commercial customers will be required to pay anything additional at this time. With the opening of the Emergency Services Facility, the Town of Stratford will see improved services available to residents in their own community including:
 - Space for RCMP members that includes interview, breathalyzer and identification rooms and equipment
 - A full time civilian clerk to provide services such as criminal record checks
 - Additional space for the Crossroads Fire Department to store current and future fire service equipment
 - Improved training facilities and opportunities for Crossroads Fire Department members
 - Leased space for Island EMS to store two ambulances onsite
 - Meeting and function rooms to enable additional community recreation and culture programs to be held
- The Town of Stratford continues to make substantial investment in water system infrastructure which includes the replacement of the Wastewater Treatment Plant delivery system Utility customers rate

increases are being phased in over three years and are currently entering the second phase of the three year rate increase plan. This increase is to help pay for the pumping station and delivery system.

The following rate increases will be in effect as of July 2019:

- The water for a single family dwelling (SFD) will go from \$73.55 to \$75.30 per quarter;
- The sewer for a single family dwelling (SFD) will go from \$108.00 to \$121.00 per quarter;
- The consumption charge for metered water will go from \$0.8679 to \$0.8885 per cubic meter; and
- The consumption charge for metered sewer will go from \$1.2744 to \$1.4278 per cubic meter.
- Phase one of a planned restoration to Kelly's Pond Watershed (Pending funding from Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program)
- Implementation of a web portal module that will allow customers to access their utility and recreation accounts and pay their bill online, as well as to allow the Town to switch to electronic billing. The purchase of integrated software will encompass all Town of Stratford departments once implemented.
- Continued investment in the active transportation network with a few trail sections being considered for asphalt resurfacing, further extension of the existing trail system and replacement of some sidewalk sections requiring repair.
- Retrofits to the multi-use court at Pondsides Park in the amount of \$75,000
- Expansion of the parking lot area at Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park
- Completion of the Town's website upgrade as well as implementation of a web portal to allow residents to view and participate in committee work of the Town

A copy of the budget document, containing more detailed information, is attached.

Other Business:

Open Government Bylaw

Stratford Town Council held second reading and adoption of the Town of Stratford's Open Government Bylaw. The bylaw will see the Town of Stratford adopt an open by default approach and will also assist the Town in meeting its requirements under the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act which is effective as of April 1, 2019.

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For more information please contact:

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