

Media Release

Stratford Responds to RCMP Retroactive Costs Decision



Imagine that!

For Immediate Release: May 4, 2023

The Town of Stratford today responded to the federal government's recent and disappointing decision to pass unbudgeted and unaccounted for costs on to municipalities related to the retroactive costs associated with the latest RCMP collective bargaining agreement.

"Let us begin by saying that our comments are in no way directed to the individual members of RCMP," commented Stratford Mayor Steve Ogden. "Our issue has been, and continues to be, that the federal government negotiated this agreement without municipalities like ours at the table or with a say in the process, and at the end of the day, we are left having to find this money from our local taxpayers. Without being able to carry a deficit these funds will affect program, service and infrastructure plans previously passed in our budget."

Despite months of municipal advocacy led by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), provincial-territorial associations, and local leaders across Canada, the federal government has indicated in the most recent federal budget it will not be meeting the request to absorb the retroactive costs associated with the latest RCMP collective bargaining agreement. Local governments were not at the table for these negotiations, and while cost estimates were provided to some municipalities, these turned out to be far below the final agreement's increase over six years, with retroactive pay going back to 2017. The cost to the Town of Stratford associated with these retroactive payments is expected to be around \$188,000.

"Our 2023-24 operation budget has just a \$300 surplus," added Mayor Ogden. "The \$188,000 owed could be used in so many places to help enhance our community further. Not being able to have a say during this process and then just being handed a bill in the end is not something any municipality would expect. As budgets are tight already, this just further stresses our bottom line".

Municipal governments are paying a growing share of policing costs but cannot run deficits and have limited revenue means available to them. FCM, as well as the Federation of PEI Municipalities (FPEIM), have reiterated the need for municipalities to be actively involved in any future processes regarding contract policing, calling this recent decision unacceptable. This is a position supported in full by the Town of Stratford.

"The Town of Stratford thanks our current, past and future RCMP members for their service and commitment to our community," added Mayor Ogden. "This again is in no way a conversation about their individual value or service, but rather is a larger issue that exists between municipalities across Canada and the federal government when it comes to negotiations that directly affect us.

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