

**HIGHLIGHTS**

2015/16 Budget

**DESCRIPTION**

- We are in Year 3 of Council's four-year Strategic Plan.
- Reassessment identified economic development projects, infrastructure improvements, Municipal Plan Review, and a "one counter" service level for residents as priorities.
- Budget reflects financial responsibility, investment readiness, and economic leadership.
- Capital and operational projects, work programs and services ensure quality delivery to residents and businesses.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOALS**

*Fiscal responsibility:* Programs and decisions supporting our continued obligation to financial accountability and efficiency.

- Budget delivered one month early;
- Electronic invoice processing;
- Improved internal controls using a purchase order module; and
- Increased reserves (more than \$800,000).

*Improving municipal services:* We want to meet the needs of citizens. In this year's budget, we have accounted for:

- Option for electronic delivery of tax bills (e-Post);
- "One counter" service delivery;
- ISO 9001:2008 interim compliance audit;
- Records management; and
- Addition of a Municipal Office in Gold River.

*Sufficient infrastructure availability:* We are insuring the strength and availability of municipal infrastructure by:

- Improving the delivery of public sewer use;
  - Sewer By-Law review
  - Surveys in New Ross and Chester Basin
  - Sewer infiltration program
  - Upgrades to systems in Western Shore and Chester
- Preparing the former school in Gold River for municipal and community use;



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## *Sufficient infrastructure availability (con't):*

- Developing an Information Technology strategy
- Completing renovations
- Improving both pedestrian and motorized routes
  - Phase 3 of the Duke Street sidewalk
  - Road crossing improvements at Duke Street and Valley Road
  - Trail maintenance and Gold River bridge upgrades
  - Road rehabilitation in Mill Cove
- Repairing Chester Basin Wharf;
- Exploring options for the organics and landfill process;
- Upgrading streetlights to LED in Chester Basin; and
- Repairing the roof at Zoe Valle Library.

*Support for environmental, social, and cultural resources:* We all want healthy communities, environmental stability, and opportunities for a better lifestyle. The Municipality working towards these choices by:

- Continuing with the Municipal Plan Review to give opportunities for the public to shape their communities;
- Engaging in an Age Friendly housing initiative;
- Providing fire services;
  - Seniors safety initiative
  - Continued support through Fire Services Coordinator
- Providing property tax rebates for those with low income;
- Fundraising for PRO Kids;
- Making even more funding available to the community through the Wind Energy Revenue Policy; and
- Providing a tax exemption/reduction program to non-profits.

*Leadership in public engagement and communication:* The Municipality continues to invite public participation in key discussion areas. We will:

- Continue with the Municipal Plan Review, creating opportunities for the public to shape their communities;
  - Further improve the website;
  - Develop a communications strategy; and
  - Provide information through regular newsletters.
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*Economic prosperity:* The Municipality continues to make economic prosperity a priority. If we want sustainability, we must attract viable business and productive citizens to our District. We plan to:

- Employ a municipal rebranding project;
  - Host the Regional Economic Network;
  - Develop local business excellence awards;
  - Develop an Investment Readiness Profile;
  - Market the Municipality through videos;
  - Provide grants for tourism projects;
  - Continue our Business Retention and Expansion program;
  - Conduct a procurement practices workshop with local businesses;
  - Further explore “Renewable to Retail” options in our Energy Strategy; and
  - Make funds available for acquisition of land for a potential Business/Industrial Park.
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## OTHER KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Residential/Resource tax rates hold at \$0.685/\$100;
- Commercial tax rate hold at \$1.53/\$100;
- All rates and fees remain the same, except
  - Landfill tipping fees drop to \$68.54/tonne for users within MODC
  - Streetlight area rates decrease across the Municipality
  - Waste collection area rates are now the same for all residents at \$0.093 (marginal decrease for some and marginal increase for others)
- Operating budget, including Capital expenditures, is \$26,487,608;
- 14% more in capital projects over last year;
- Rise in net expenditures of 2.7%;
- Extra 3% in tax revenue (approx. \$400,000) allows for the stability in area rates, fees, and property taxes, which are already among the lowest in Nova Scotia;
- \$4.7 million in capital projects, with assistance from nearly \$2 million in infrastructure grants;
- Wind Energy projects will generate an estimated \$970,000 in revenue (Kaizer Meadow COMFIT project and South Canoe Wind Farm); and
- Net balance for Kaizer Meadow wind turbine (\$479,530) is directed to Reserve Accounts, further eliminating the need to borrow resulting in avoided borrowing costs (interest).

## PROVINCIAL STATISTICS

Mandatory contributions towards provincial services equal 62.58% of our general tax revenue or \$6.97 million;

Education	\$4,447,088	2.40% <b>increase</b> from last year
RCMP	\$1,682,391	2.90% <b>increase</b> from last year
Corrections	\$236,441	0.80% <b>decrease</b> from last year
Assessment	\$341,436	<b>no change</b> from last year
Roads	\$179,614	1.50% <b>increase</b> from last year
Library	\$69,056	1.50% <b>increase</b> from last year
Housing Authority	\$20,000	<b>no change</b> from last year

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