

BUDGET SPEECH 2015

Management has been working on the 2015 budget since February of this year. They were challenged with a monumental task as the budget had to be reduced by over \$800,000. After several months of hard work, they were able to achieve what they had set out to do. In addition, the City received good news from the Provincial Government. The City will receive \$380,000 more in their Unconditional Grant and an additional \$196,000 which is a payment in lieu of taxes on federal properties.

OPERATING BUDGET

As a result of all of the above, we are pleased to tell the citizens of Bathurst that there will be NO tax increase for 2015. The municipal tax rate will not change. The other good news is, we will continue to provide the same level of service to our citizens in 2015.

The budget will include an amount of \$25,000 in an effort to bring a motorcycle show to Bathurst. We have been negotiating with Atlanticade and if unsuccessful, we will put our efforts into another venue. The financial impact of such a venture on the business community will be a very positive one.

An amount of \$35,000 has been set aside to develop a proper and formalized strategic plan for the City. This will set a path for Council and Staff and have everyone working toward the same unified vision.

An amount of \$15,000 has been included in the budget to allow the City to have a climate change adaptation plan prepared. This will be critical to our future in establishing minimum elevations for new buildings, determining where lift stations are necessary in low elevations, etc. It is also necessary to have such a plan in order to access Gas Tax funds from the Federal Government.

An amount of \$150,000 has been added to the snow budget to prevent the recurring deficit we have experienced over the last few years. As we know, we live in the north and the weather is very unpredictable. However, the 2015 budget more accurately reflects what is necessary in order to continue to provide a good level of service in that area.

We are fortunate to be able to put an amount of \$200,000 in a reserve fund which will provide a contingency for unexpected or unforeseen events in 2015.

UTILITY BUDGET

The citizens will see a very marginal increase of 2% in their water rates for 2015. This increase is unavoidable in order to continue to provide a high quality of water to our residents. This means an average family of four people will pay \$12.00 more per year.

The City will continue with its five-year plan in upgrades and modifications to our Water Treatment Plant.

OTHER NEWS

Also planned for 2015, is to establish a committee consisting of members of Council, Staff and perhaps members of the public to review our total operation to determine if the levels of service being offered are adequate and whether or not changes need to be made. Our ultimate goal is to provide an excellent service to our residents in the most efficient manner possible.

CONCLUSION

Those are some of the highlights for the 2015 budget. At this time, I want to thank and congratulate our management team for all of their efforts in presenting to Council a very responsible and all-inclusive budget.