

Press Release - May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Town of Mahone Bay Adopts 2020-21 Budget

Mahone Bay, NS – The Mahone Bay Town Council approved an operating budget – including general and utility budgets – totaling \$5.89 million on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The approved tax rate remains unchanged at \$1.25 per \$100 of residential assessment and \$3.16 per \$100 of commercial assessment. The capital infrastructure charge used to support capital expenditures and investments in long term community assets will increase from \$275 to \$295 per unit. To reduce the impact of taxation the Council has also approved a low-income tax exemption program providing graduated tax relief ranging from \$100 to \$600 to qualifying tax payers with household incomes under \$32,000.

The Council completed this year's budget process remotely – live streamed to Youtube – as a precaution against Covid-19, one of many adjustments this year as our community feels the impacts of the global pandemic and measures to combat its spread. The Town's 2020-21 budget includes measures such as a short-term suspension of interest charges on tax and utility bills and an increase in the budget for low-income tax relief, intended to assist residents and businesses impacted by Covid-19; a Property Tax Financing Program Policy is also under development. Council has also held tax rates without an increase this year, despite the increasing cost of providing services to residents.

Numerous projects and initiatives in support of Council's 2018-21 Strategic Plan continue in 2020-21, including:

- Initiation of a public process to review and update to the Town's Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law, conducted by Upland planning + design.
- Continuing to take steps toward a comprehensive asset management strategy with the newly established Asset Management Committee, including completing condition assessments of Town infrastructure, supported by FCM.
- Development of a wayfinding strategy with the Mahone Bay Tourism and Chamber of Commerce to ensure our community's signage

remains current and effective while reflecting the best Mahone Bay has to offer.

- Climate mitigation initiatives including a community GHG emissions inventory and initiatives to support electrification of home and business heating and renewable energy generation.
- Development of an Accessibility Plan with the Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee and an Operational Plan specific to the Town of Mahone Bay.
- Continuing to build reserves necessary for long-term planning and asset management, utilizing gas tax revenues, deed transfer tax revenues, and dividends from the Alternative Energy Resource Authority.

The Town Council also approved 2020-21 capital expenditures – including general and utility budgets – totaling \$12.7 million, supported by a projected \$7.2 million in external funding (56.5%)

Key investments in the 2020-21 capital budget include:

- Plans for the replacement of the Town's aging fire station to accommodate newer, larger equipment and ensure the safety of our dedicated Fire Department volunteers.
- Upgrades to the Town's wastewater treatment facility to eliminate residual chlorine in treated effluent, complying with federal regulations.
- Continued renovation of the Michael O'Connor Memorial Bandstand, supported by community donations and anticipated federal funding.
- Continued investment in recreational properties including the Town ballfield.
- Needed repairs to the public wharf and breakwater at the Mahone Bay Civic Marina.
- Several major water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects and the Edgewater Street shoreline improvement project, for which the

Town will require the support of our provincial and federal governments to proceed.

The complete 2020-21 Town Budget is now available on the Town of Mahone Bay website at [www.townofmahonebay.ca](http://www.townofmahonebay.ca).

**For Additional Information Contact:**

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