

Innisfail Town Council approves 2016 Budget

For immediate release

December 15, 2015

After deliberating late last month, Innisfail Town Council approved the Town's 2016 Budget on Monday.

Capital spending, which includes the construction, renovation and expansion of municipal infrastructure, was approved at **\$5,960,642**. Operating spending, which includes the day-to-day expenses required to operate a municipality, was approved at **\$21,346,796**.

Highlights

- Phase 1 of Town Administration Building remodel/expansion
 - *With Phase 2 to commence in 2017*
- Funding to develop new trails, and improve/repair recreational parks and facilities
- Sewage lagoon reclamation
 - *Funded partially through New Building Canada Fund grant*
- Sanitary sewer replacement - 56 Street and C&E Trail
- Arena renovations - LED lights, shower facility upgrades, additional storage space
- Fire Department contribution to reserve for the eventual replacement of equipment
 - *The Fire Department's overall expenditure increase also includes a new administrative position and more frequent training for members (from twice a month to weekly)*
- Wayfinding and signage program
 - *The portion of the program being funded this year will determine the most strategic locations for the placement of wayfinding signage around town*
- Preparation of skate park concept and design, and review of potential locations
- Preparation of concepts for potential tournament house designs
- Northeast trunk main replacement
 - *Funded partially through New Building Canada Fund grant*
- Relocation and expansion of RV sanitary dump

Tax Rate

Council, citing a difficult economy and the Town's astute financial position, decided against increasing the residential tax rate. The decision arrived after extensive discussion on the topic, from which a 1% increase was proposed. On Monday, councillors voted 4-3 in favour of 0%.

While the mill rate will remain unchanged, some taxpayers will see an increase in their tax bill through property assessment, which is expected increase around 3%.

Services & Utilities

The Town operates water, wastewater and solid waste services on a user-pay, break-even basis. Increases applied by the Town generally reflect similar increases applied by user groups such as the South Red Deer Regional Wastewater Commission.

- **Water** rates will increase from \$2.10 per cubic metre to \$2.15 per cubic metre (based on an increase from the Mountain View Regional Water Commission).
- **Wastewater** rates will increase from \$2.45 per cubic metre to \$2.85 per cubic metre (based on a 20-cent increase from the South Red Deer Regional Wastewater Commission and a 20-cent increase as per the Town's *2020 Plan*).
- **Garbage and recycling** rates will remain unchanged from 2015.

Example of an average monthly utility bill based on consumption of 10m³/mo.		
Description	2015	2016
Water flat rate	\$10	\$10
Per cubic metre water	\$21	\$21.50
Sanitary flat rate	\$15	\$15
Per cubic metre sanitary	\$24	\$28.50
Garbage	\$17	\$17
Recycling	\$5	\$5
Total	\$92	\$97

In September 2015, the Town began transporting its wastewater to the City of Red Deer's Wastewater Treatment Plant. The projected fee to the Town for that service in 2016 is \$3.1 million. To offset that cost, and to ease the financial burden on ratepayers, Council approved 2016 subsidization funding in the amount of \$784,804 -- monies derived from a 'stabilization' fund created in order to help introduce rate increases gradually.

“The 2016 Budget represents a responsible approach to maintaining quality services while ensuring the Town is adequately prepared for future growth.”

- Mayor Brian Spiller

“Town staff have once again acted diligently to ensure that residents’ needs are met through careful financial planning that takes into consideration the difficult economic times in which we live. Under the direction of Council, the Town remains financially healthy and prosperous.”

- Helen Dietz, Chief Administrative Officer

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