

Innisfail Town Council approves ambitious budget for 2022 with a focus on the future

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On Monday, December 13, 2021, Innisfail Town Council approved the Town's 2022 operating and capital budgets.

Council passed an operating budget of \$22,785,374, a capital budget of \$7,168,668, and a contingency of \$78,842. An increase to water and wastewater rates was included to cover delivery costs and build reserves for future infrastructure.

After keeping tax rates flat for two consecutive years, Council approved an increase of 2%. The increase in revenue will be used to cover unforeseen expenditures, such as those associated with policing, and to cover ever-increasing operating costs.

Tax assessments are not determined until the spring, and mill rates will be set in March of 2022. These together will determine individual property tax assessments.

With the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Administration struck a balance between ensuring the delivery of core services while also improving infrastructure and upgrading amenities available to residents.

The Town faces many challenges regarding the current state of its facilities. This year's budget begins the process of addressing these challenges with a focus on future growth.

Despite these challenges, the Town's financial condition remains strong. The municipality is once again in the enviable position of being able to offer consistent and stable taxes, maintain a healthy level of reserves, and carry relatively no financial debt.

Utility Rates

Innisfail has water rates that are comparable to those in many other communities in our region. Water rates will increase this year from \$2.60 per cubic metre to \$2.71 per cubic metre. This increase is the result of an \$.11 increase in the rate charged to the Town by the Mountain View Regional Water Commission, the supplier of the town's water. The new budget sees the monthly water flat rate remain at \$10.00 per metered site.

In order to build reserves for future infrastructure replacement projects, Wastewater (sewer) rates will increase from \$3.45 per cubic metre to \$3.60 per cubic metre. This \$.15 increase reflects a \$.08 increase in rates charged by the South Red Deer Regional Wastewater Commission. The monthly wastewater flat rate will also remain the same as last year at \$10.00 per metered site.

These increases will ensure the Town can continue to provide quality water to residents while reflecting the real-world costs of water delivery.

2022 Capital Projects

Several key projects were identified for 2022, and grant money was available for many of these. In order to ensure the Town's physical infrastructure continues to function in a safe and reliable manner, council approved many of the projects earmarked as priorities. Those included in the 2022 budget include (budgeted project amount in parenthesis):

- Heliport Upgrade (\$641,271)
- 42 Avenue Vinyl Sound Attenuation Wall (\$1,000,000)
- 2022 Surface Improvements (\$1,230,000)
- Gravel/Plow truck (\$200,000)
- Eastgate Lift Station (\$650,000)
- Macs Playground Replacement (\$230,000)
- Ball Diamond 4,5 & 6 Irrigation (\$55,000)
- Arena Playground (\$250,000)
- Outdoor Rink Upgrade (\$400,000)
- Energy Conservation Measures (\$1,387,015)
- Library Learning Centre: New Vinyl Flooring in Kitchen and Supply Room (\$11,000)
- Dodd's Lake Area Design(\$50,000)
- Refrigeration Control System Upgrade (\$50,000)
- Arena Condenser Unit Replacement (\$150,000)
- Liquid Chlorine Production Unit at the Aquatic Centre (\$70,000)
- Pool Upgrade Schematics and Detailed Design (\$300,000)
- Wheelchair Accessible Van (\$96,363)

This ambitious capital budget demonstrates council's commitment to ensuring Innisfail retains its strong economic position by building a community that is attractive to potential residents and businesses.

"Council has passed an ambitious budget for 2022, ensuring our community is well served in achieving our goal of improving our resident's quality of life and well-being. We are focused on enhancing recreational opportunities with the addition of new playgrounds and a new outdoor skating rink, and we continue to move forward with an aquatic centre/multiplex schematic design.

Council's top priorities also include accelerating economic development, completing necessary infrastructure projects, supporting community health and safety with a new helipad and wheelchair-accessible van, enhancing community events with the purchase of a mobile event stage, and continuing to provide the social programming our community relies on through our support of FCSS Innisfail.

Through these initiatives, Innisfail will continue to be one of central Alberta's most attractive and affordable communities. Innisfail Town Council remains focused on our commitment to be the community of choice in the region."

– Mayor Jean Barclay