

December 6, 2017

Translating numbers into community values – City 2018 budget deliberations concluded

City Council and staff have concluded financial planning and finalized the City's 2018 budget.

“Once again, Council has confirmed a 10-year budget built on the principles of long-term vision and stable, predictable property tax rates to provide essential services, with funding for infrastructure renewal and modest new services. Campbell River is recognized as an example of good governance across the province, and the 2018 Financial Plan builds on the previous international awards for best practices for local government budgeting. It also reflects our ongoing efforts to respond to community needs based on surveys, conversations in the community and with agencies that support our community,” says Mayor Andy Adams. *“Our goal is to adopt the Financial Plan bylaw before the new year to allow staff to begin work plans and deliver on projects as soon as possible.”*

“2018 will be another busy year, especially for capital projects. We will complete the new water supply system early in the year and begin several new and significant projects,” says city manager Deborah Sargent. *“With significant investment and construction going on in Campbell River, Council has delivered an optimistic and fiscally-responsible budget to maintain the momentum of this economic activity, keeping in mind the need to leave room for future demands.”*

Highlights of additional community infrastructure investments:

- Big Rock Boat Ramp phase one: in-water work upgrades including floating ramps (\$1.9 million)
- Design of phase three of Highway 19A upgrades from Rockland to Big Rock Boat Ramp for construction in 2020 (\$13.1 million over three years); \$6.4 million in federal/provincial grants support the project
- Waterfront sewer forcemain phase one upgrades (\$6.8 million) and Larwood-Erickson sewer upgrades (\$3.1 million)
- Sportsplex design (\$80,000) and weight room equipment replacement (\$150,000)
- Walter Morgan Studio rehabilitation (\$200,000)
- Willow Point Park fieldhouse repairs (\$75,000)
- Core asset infrastructure upgrades for facilities, parks, roads, stormwater, sewer and water (\$8 to 10 million each year over 10 years)

Highlights of expanded services:

- One additional RCMP member for public safety enhancements (\$179,000), second member in 2019 (\$182,000)
- Transit service expansion (\$82,000)
- Development engineer to support ongoing growth and development in the community (\$77,000)
- Auxiliary firefighter compensation realignment to comparator communities (\$51,000)
- Airport landscaping maintenance (\$21,000)
- Centennial Park maintenance (\$10,000)
- Scotch broom management (\$10,000)

Highlights of operating projects (includes carryforward amounts from 2017):

- 3.5-acre site next steps and walkway design (\$140,000)
- Beautification grants (\$40,000)
- Social grants (\$25,000 in 2018, increasing to \$100,000 in 2019)
- Downtown initiatives including live streets, façade and signage improvements (\$238,000)
- Additional spirit square programming (\$12,000)
- Public art (\$68,000)
- Sea level rise assessment and planning (\$180,000); supplements a \$175,000 federal grant
- Airport business opportunity fund (\$50,000)

Highlights of 2018 budget

- Provides approximately \$71 million for operations, with another \$33 million for capital projects
- Covers inflationary cost and contract increases in base budget including major contracts for RCMP, transit, and solid waste services (to maintain existing levels for more than 100 services)
- Includes 0.75 per cent tax increase for new capital projects and maintains reserve funds for renewal / replacement of aging infrastructure investment supported by the 2016 citizen survey
- Anticipated new revenues from local building and development valued at \$507,000
- Annual gaming grant revenues of \$720,000 and community works fund grants of \$1.4 million help fund enhanced services and capital improvements without property tax increases
- Consistent with Council's *Financial Stability & Resiliency Program*, the approved budget maintains a residential tax rate within the average among representative households in similar-size and Vancouver Island communities
- Includes a property tax increase of 2.1 per cent (\$51 per average household).

“Council and senior staff extend praise to our Chief Financial Officer, Myriah Foort, for masterminding the City’s award-winning 10-year financial plan. And we appreciate the hard work of the entire finance team and the efforts of all department heads in this process that translates numbers into community values.” Sargent adds.

Financial planning meetings took place Dec. 4 through 6. Presentations from community residents ahead of Council’s deliberations focused on firefighting service, solid waste fees, Sportsplex improvements and environmental protection (pesticide use and invasive plant management), urban forest management and a request to support a downtown dinner program for people in need. View recordings of the budget meetings at www.campbellriver.ca (click on the Council Webcast button).

Services provided by the City of Campbell River include: drinking water, sewer, emergency response, garbage, recycling and yard waste collection, flood protection, streets, sidewalks and traffic control, public recreation facilities, land use planning, development services and building inspection, law enforcement and firefighters, parks, recreation and culture, transit and airport, environmental management, economic development, museum, art gallery and other facilities.

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