



For Immediate Release

January 11, 2016

City Passes 2016 Operating and Capital Budgets

Increases to the 2016 net operating budget have been held to 0.9 per cent, as administration worked to keep property tax increases to a minimum, and to find further efficiencies in city operations over the coming year.

“There will be a 3.9 per cent increase in property taxes in 2016, with 0.9 per cent going to fund ongoing city operations,” said Mayor Bob Maloney. “The remaining three per cent will go towards capital infrastructure improvement projects,” he said. “This has been one of the most challenging budgets the city has seen in decades and reflects the more difficult economic times,” said the Mayor. Previous years have seen annual tax increases in the six per cent range.

The 2016 Operating and Capital Budgets were passed on Monday January 11, at the regular City Council meeting.

“Our increase of just 3.9 per cent compares favorably when you look at increases in Regina (3.3 %) and Saskatoon (3.96 %),” said the city’s Director of Finance, Shannon Bell. “This budget focuses on providing the same services more efficiently and at a reduced cost,” she said. “These are challenging times as all cities face the large gap in funding to replace aging infrastructure. We recognize that large property tax increases cannot continue year after year, and Council and administration have worked hard to find new efficiencies in the way we do business to hold increases to a minimum,” she said.

Infrastructure replacement and renewal are becoming the most pressing issues across Canada. As an example, Yorkton has approximately 150 kilometres of paved roadways, with 88 percent in either poor or fair condition. All will need to be resurfaced soon or they will deteriorate to the point where they must be completely rebuilt at a greatly increased cost. “Yorkton has made good progress in directing a significantly larger portion of our tax dollars to the Capital budget for projects like this,” said Bell. In 2012 Capital allocations were \$2,044,000, while in 2016 they will reach \$4,667,600.

Staffing increases for 2016 are limited to one additional seasonal Parks Department employee, necessary to maintain an additional 90 acres of property throughout the city.

As of December 31, 2015, both the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and International Association of Fire Fighters Union (IAFF) contracts expired. Negotiations will begin early in the new year and the actual increase to wages will not be known until that process is complete.

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