



**For Immediate Release**

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**Yorkton Budget Reflects Provincial Download**

Yorkton will see taxation revenue increases of 9.46 percent this year, and a whopping 6.25 percent of this increase is necessary to make up for provincial cuts to the city of some \$901,000. Three per cent of the increase is earmarked to continue funding capital improvements throughout the City with only a .21 percent increase in operating expenses.

Council passed the budget unanimously at their regular meeting April 24. Normally budgets are passed in January, but Council decided to wait until implications of the provincial budget were known.

“Council struggled to find options in an effort to maintain services and continue to fund necessary improvements to streets, underground infrastructure and drainage, said Mayor Bob Maloney. “Everything was on the table, and we want to make it clear that two thirds of the tax increase this year is due to provincial downloading.” “Originally the City was looking at a six percent increase, but we have since reduced some levels of service and deferred a number of projects due to this unexpected provincial funding reduction. We have also made further reductions to Fleet Operations, including deferral of equipment replacement,” said the Mayor. “Requests to increase policing are not on the table this year, and a planned three percent increase to the operations budget just to match inflation was eliminated, he said. Council decided to make no cuts to the city bus service, the library and the airport.

“Administration had already seen a cut of 10 percent in 2016. We did eliminate two seasonal positions, one at the Gallagher Centre and one at the Deer Park Golf Course, and some summer student positions, but no further staffing cuts were possible if existing services were to be maintained,” said the Mayor.

The one percent increase in provincial sales tax also increases City expenses by some \$150,000, a factor many people would not consider, said the Mayor.

The Mayor expects 2018 will again be a difficult year for Council due to uncertainty about levels of provincial funding going forward. “We do not have a sense of what the future holds in terms of predictable provincial funding, which is so important in setting a city budget. I’m hopeful discussions take place that will provide that certainty,” he said.

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