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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE ADOPTS 2024 BUDGET

Town of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta – The Town of Rocky Mountain House Council has adopted its balanced 2024 operating budget in the amount of \$26,886,633 and capital budget of \$6,683,200.

The approved budget includes a 4% increase in property tax revenue. This will generate \$376,000 more in municipal property tax revenue for the Town of Rocky Mountain House next year.

“Similar to all municipalities in Alberta, Council faced steep inflation and other challenges with this budget,” said Deputy Mayor Marley Capraro. “In the operating budget, this is especially noticeable in the rising cost of utilities necessary to operate Town facilities.”

These increases are tempered by the Town’s investments in energy efficient upgrades, particularly at the Credit Union Co-op Aquatic Centre, over the past few years.

“If the Town hadn’t pursued these upgrades to the heating and air-handling units, we would be facing an even greater operating cost increase,” noted Capraro.

Other revenue increases include an additional \$630,000 in grants, and \$890,000 in returns on investment.

Council approved the 2024 budget at its December 19, 2023 regular Council meeting. It provides Council’s direction on spending for the coming and future years and allows administration to implement Council’s directed service levels for the municipality.

The 2024 operating budget includes revenues of \$9.7 million from property taxation (an increase of \$376,000 over 2023) and \$3.5 million in operating grants. Service and user fees (including utilities), permits and licenses, leases, rentals and returns on investments make up the balance of revenue.

Actual property tax rates will be set in the spring after the Town receives its 2024 property assessment roll. Each assessment class will see lightly different increases, with 3.79% for

residential, 4.97% for non-residential commercial improved and 3.42% for non-residential large business.

The average increase for a residential property will be approximately \$92 per year. Increases range from \$15 to \$102 annually, depending on the assessment class.

	2023 Average Tax	2024 Average Tax	Change
Vacant Residential	1,197	1,259	62
Single Family	2,556	2,658	102
Duplex	1,503	1,563	60
Townhouse	2,029	2,110	81
Apartment Condo	1,823	1,896	73
Mobile Home - own lot	1,486	1,545	59
Mobile Home - in park	373	388	15
Average Residential	2,163	2,255	92

This chart shows the anticipated tax increase for each residential assessment class, and includes municipal, education and seniors' requisition amounts.

Operating expense highlights include \$4 million for protective services, \$5.7 million for utilities, \$2 million for engineering and operations and \$5.1 million for recreation, parks culture and social services.

The cost of governance (Council) is forecast at \$374,207 or 1.4 per cent of the operating budget.

Utility rates going up March 1

Council also set [2024 fees, rates and charges](#) that includes modest increases to recreation and utility fees, to be phased in over the course of the coming year.

New utility rates for water, sewer, and wastewater as well as solid waste will take effect on March 1, 2024. [These increases are supported by a 2023 utility rate study](#), to ensure rates charged cover operating and capital costs for current and future operations.

As of March 1, the average residential property consuming 14 m3 of water per month will see a \$13.35 increase in monthly billing for water and wastewater, and \$1.10 increase for solid waste.

“The new wastewater treatment plant, effectively mandated by higher levels of government to meet ever tightening environmental regulations, is directly affecting these rates,” explained Deputy Mayor Capraro. “In spite of these increases, Rocky Mountain House will still have lower than average residential and commercial fees for these municipal services, compared to other municipalities of our size.”

The last utility rate increase in the Town of Rocky Mountain House was in 2019. Since then, residential properties have increased curbside service with the addition of both organic (green) carts, and recycling (blue) carts. A 2023 waste audit showed Rocky Mountain House residents are diverting more waste from the landfill, however there is still room for improvement. As such, 2024 will also see an educational campaign to drive more uptake in these valuable diversion programs.

A new \$30 fee for criminal record checks and vulnerable sector checks will take effect on February 1, at the RCMP detachment. There is no fee for volunteers who provide proof of their volunteer status when they apply for these checks.

Capital Projects

Capital projects for the year total \$6,683,200.

The largest new project for 2024 will be \$1.4 million towards the new Airport terminal building. This project is cost-shared evenly with Clearwater County. Airfield lighting (\$622,000) will be funded largely by a provincial grant, with the Town and County each contributing \$77,750.

Capital investments are also planned for two areas prone to watermain breaks: \$1 million for deep utility rehabilitation and paving of 44A St between 50 and 51 Avenues and \$100,000 for a watermain replacement at Hwy. 11A and Hwy 752.

\$250,000 will fund a trail extension along Hwy 11 from 66 Ave to 71 Ave, completing the walking trail loop on the north end of Town. The Town will also invest \$250,000 in the Rocky Mountain House Bike Park Society pump track.

Work also continues on the \$30 Million wastewater treatment plant, as a carry-over project from 2023. The plant is expected to be fully operational by early 2025.

Municipal budget process

Council continues to refer to its [Strategic Plan](#) to inform its decision-making process.

The 2024 operating and capital budgets have been prepared through a collaborative process that began in the summer of 2023:

- September 5: [Regular Council meeting agenda item](#) regarding budget assumptions and goals.
- November 12-14: Service Level Review.
- October and November: Administration prepares draft budget.
- December 6 and 7: Draft budget presented to Council for review and amendments.

A five-year operating, and ten-year capital plan has also been developed and included as part of the budget document. This long-range planning ensures that the municipality is financially viable and that financing requirements are addressed for the long term.

Related media and documents

[2024 Budget Summary](#)

[2024 Capital Projects summary and funding sources](#)

[Administrative Budget Report](#)

[Budget meeting Day 1](#) (recorded livestream)

[Budget meeting Day 2](#) (recorded livestream)

[Council 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

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