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South Cumberland NEWS

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\$1.95 + HST

Cumberland County Lowers Residential and Commercial Tax Rates

The Municipality of Cumberland approved a \$36.4 million operating budget at a special virtual meeting held today (Friday, May 26, 2023).

The municipality is facing significant increased cost in the coming fiscal year. The recently awarded solid waste curbside collection contract is estimated to cost \$544,000 more than last year. Costs for mandatory contributions to education are up \$323,000, RCMP policing costs are up \$312,000, insurance is estimated to increase by almost \$190,000 and salaries and benefits are estimated to cost \$634,000 more than last year.

The municipality is continuing to move forward with reforms to the fire service in the County, in the wake of the Gaudreault report. While some additional wage costs are budgeted for the last quarter of the year to address management and administration in the fire service, the biggest investment on the operating side of the ledger is a transfer of more than \$400,000 to reserves to address future capital investment in fire apparatus and buildings. The county is served by 16 volunteer fire departments in 18 locations, housing almost 90 emergency/fire vehicle vehicles. The municipality provides capital and operating support to each department.

Of the over \$36 million in operating expenditures, more than \$12 million are costs mandated by the Province of Nova Scotia, which the municipality simply sends a cheque to the province for. Mandatory contributions to education, corrections, housing, policing and assessment amount to about a third of the operating budget.

While property assessments were up this year significantly, on average about 12 per cent, cost pressures made this year's budget process a difficult one. Recognizing that rising assessments add to the tax burden for taxpayers, council approved a decrease in the general residential rate of three cents, from \$1.17 to \$1.14 per \$100 of assessment, and a decrease in the general commercial rate of five cents, from \$2.71 per \$100 of assessment. Deed transfer tax rates remain the same as do the area rates in the communi-

ties of Springhill and Parrsboro, where taxpayers remain responsible for street and sidewalk maintenance, storm water management and streetlights.

"We understand the pressures being faced by our taxpayers, through additional costs for oil, gas and food, so we did everything we could to lower the residential and commercial tax rates, but we want people to understand as well that the expenses of the municipality also went up about \$2 million this year," Municipality of Cumberland Mayor Murray Scott said.

"Policing, insurance, employee wages, solid waste and mandatory transfers are all seeing increased costs. Based on that we had to try to find some efficiencies while working to lower the tax rate. Council was very responsible trying to protect the taxpayers as best we could and continue to provide services. It's about finding the right balance."

Council also approved a general and water capital budget of \$21.6 million.

The biggest single project is the rehabilitation of Junction Road in Springhill at a cost of more than \$7.6 million with over \$3 million of the bill being funded from reserves generated from the Springhill area rate and water utility and over \$3 million from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). A waterline replacement, along with paving Athol Road from McGee Street to the former town boundary will cost about \$2.5 million. The Athol Road project is receiving about \$1 million from the ICIP with the balance coming from water utility funds.

The municipality is investing another \$400,000 to provide bunker gear, breathing apparatus and radios for County fire departments, \$1,500,000 has been set aside to purchase fire apparatus (vehicles) and \$2.4 million has been earmarked from gas tax funds for the replacement of fire halls in Springhill and Parrsboro as the municipality moves forward with the hub model of providing fire services.

More details on both the operating and capital budgets will be available on our website.

Coastal Gardens gets \$56,250 Non-Repayable Loan

On June 22, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for ACOA, announced a non-repayable contribution of \$56,250 to Coastal Gardens, an Indigenous and woman-owned garden centre in Pugwash. The funding is being provided through ACOA's Regional Economic Growth through Innovation (REGI) - Indigenous Business Development program.



ACOA Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor met with Danielle VanDalen, Owner and Operator of Coastal Gardens and her husband Philip Sprague, during a site visit at the Pugwash business in May. (Contributed)

New "Museum" Definition Adopted

In 2022 the International Council of Museums adopted a new definition of what a museum is. "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally, and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing." As the Fundy Geological Museum celebrates the last 30 years, it's already looking towards the future, streamlining programming and adapting how the museum engages locals and visitors alike. "We all know that the ongoing climate crisis is front and center for many institutions, especially those situated along the coast. We have plans to expand upon our paleoclimate exhibits and we've already begun that work

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will also improve quality and meet growing demand from retail and commercial clients.

Earlier this month, Minister Petitpas Taylor toured the company's retail and production facility to see its growth and hear about future plans. Today's announcement further demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to supporting rural, women-owned and Indigenous businesses so they can scale-up and reach new markets.

Opened in 2009, Coastal Gardens is a greenhouse and garden centre providing locally grown ornamental and edible plant material for homeowners, cottagers, and commercial businesses. It specializes in deer resistant and salt tolerant materials for the Northumberland Shore.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, business revenues increased by over 300 percent.

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The company nearly sold out of all stock in each of the last three years, growing the business from part-time to full-time. Two trends are driving the expansion of the business, including a resurgence in gardening since the pandemic, as well as increased demand from people interested in growing their own food to help combat rising prices.

Only 17 percent of Canadian small and medium-sized businesses are owned by women. Studies show that by advancing gender equality and women's participation in the economy, Canada could add up to \$150 billion in GDP. Indigenous businesses and organizations play a vital role in strengthening Canada's economy. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) supports several initiatives to help these businesses and spur community growth.

Canada Day Events in Parrsboro

Saturday July 1, 2023 - CANADA DAY

9am-1pm - Parrsboro Farmers Market - St. George's Anglican Church Hall - 23 Church Street - Parrsboro

9am-1pm - Advocate Saturday Market - The Log Building - Mills Road - Advocate Harbour

9am-4pm - Painting in Pastel, the Dust of Butterfly Wings course starts - July 1st 2nd - 2 day course - Click the link for details - Art Lab Studios and Gallery - 121 Main Street - Parrsboro

10am-3pm - Canada Day Celebration & Activities - Games for kids, dunk tank, jail & much more fun - Parrsboro Fire Department will have hot dogs, hamburgers & fries available - Parrsboro Legion will have refreshments available - Parrsboro Legion - 56 Moore Street - Parrsboro

10am-5pm - Prosauropod's Birthday Party - Fundy Geological Museum will be kicking off their 30th anniversary celebration with Prosauropod's 2,000,030th birthday & Canada Day celebrations including free museum admission, games, activities, live music, cupcakes and lots more - 162 Two Islands Road - Parrsboro

1pm - Canada Day Celebration & Open House - Hosted by Five Islands Fire Brigade - Free BBQ, equipment display, 50/50 and more - Five Islands Fire Hall - 353 Hwy 2 - Five Islands

1pm-3pm - Canada Day Celebration & Cake Auction - Everyone invited to come out for music, refreshments & celebration - Special guest performance by Parrsboro Citizens Choir - Ottawa House - 1155 Whitehall Road - Parrsboro

1pm-3pm - Parrsboro Free Walking Tour - (Weather permitting)

Meet at 1pm at the Fundy Geological Museum (162 Two Islands Road) for a guided walking tour of Parrsboro downtown area. The tour will be approximately 2 hours, cover about 3kms & end on Main Street. Wear comfortable shoes, bring water & any other essentials & dress for the weather. No need to pre-register, just show up. The tour is run by a volunteer at no charge but tips are appreciated.

7pm - Open Mic Night - Everyone welcome to come out for some great entertainment or to step into the spotlight and be a star - 50/50 draw & canteen open - Diligent River Community Hall - 10267 Hwy 209 - Diligent River

9pm-1am - Parrsboro Canada Day Dance - Live music by Sweet Revenge - Bar & canteen open - \$12/person - Parrsboro Fire Hall - 252 Willow Street - Parrsboro

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