



Budget Speech 2021

Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay

Councillor Michelle Baikie

Chair of Finance, Administration and Policy Committee

November 30th, 2020

Your Worship Mayor Andersen, Deputy Mayor Pomeroy, Councillors Dyson-Edmunds, Compton-Hobbs, and Crann, Ladies and Gentleman.

As Chair of the Finance, Administration and Policy Committee, it gives me great pleasure to present to you the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay's 2021 budget.

During the 2021 Municipal Budget process, Council dealt with the challenge of balancing our fiscal realities with varying priorities and projects for the municipality during a global pandemic. Even amidst the challenges and faced with COVID-19, Council has maintained a fiscally responsible and strategic approach.

Like all municipalities in the province, COVID-19 has had a financial impact on the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

The Town's response and mitigation (enhanced cleaning protocols) of town facilities indoors and outdoors have created its challenges. There were increased costs related to purchasing additional PPE and cleaning supplies. In 2020, Council saw revenue losses from Municipal Landfill Tipping Fees and Recreational Facilities. These losses in revenue streams had a significant impact. The Town expects a similar trend for 2021 and has prepared for that.

Twenty-three businesses were approved for relief under the Town's COVID-19 Business Tax Relief program, with a total cost of over \$18,000.00.

Council appreciates the community participation in the 2021 pre-budget consultation. The community input into essential processes such as the municipal budget is vital in determining community needs and future growth that our residents expect. During the pre-budget public consultation process, we heard from concerned residents and community groups/organizations. The 2021 budget is well-rounded, with community priorities based on feedback received and strategic infrastructure investments for our Town's future.

Council is confident the strategic investments outlined will contribute to the future growth and development of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

We have made investments in new hires, such as:

- One permanent full-time Fire Protection Officer
- Three permanent Seasonal Heavy Equipment Operators
- Four temporary Seasonal positions in Public Works.

We continued with investments in water and sewer projects such as Pumphouse upgrades, water line upgrades, and sewage lift station upgrades. Town contribution is \$832,000.00

The fleet replacement continuing with one new vehicle for 2021.

There will be investments in new or upgraded equipment for various departments.

The Town will continue its partnership with Healthy Waters Labrador to fulfill its commitment to Environmental Stewardship in the Birch Island Conservation Area. Council and Healthy Waters Labrador aim

to promote healthy and active living by continuing to maintain the boardwalk.

This year's budget is balanced at **\$14,688,624.40**. This figure includes planned multi-year capital works and other projects, cost-shared with the Province and the Government of Canada.

Your Worship, we will continue to provide tax relief to low-income property owners and I am pleased to say we have increased the income threshold by 2%.

There will be no increase in mil rates for residential or commercial property tax.

The business tax mil rates, minimum vacant commercial property tax, and water and sewer rates will remain constant for 2021.

I do want to highlight a couple of items, the Town Transportation study will look at residents' accessibility needs, with an intense focus on much-needed transport. The second item is the Central Labrador YMCA (Labrador Wellness Centre) Construction, which began in Spring 2019, is nearly complete. The new \$30 million Central Labrador YMCA is on track for a Spring 2021 opening.

In conclusion, Your Worship, I would like to thank Council and staff for their hard work in putting out a fiscally responsible budget for 2021.

I would like to acknowledge our residents for their contributions and suggestions during the budget consultation process through emails, telephone calls, and in person.

Given the challenges that this town has faced during this COVID-19 Global Pandemic, I am pleased to say that this 2021 budget continues to be a fiscally-conservative budget, Your Worship, one

that will allow us to meet our strategic objectives while, at the same time, continuing to provide quality services to our residents.

As municipal budgets are subject to approval by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment, no further details will be released until the Town has received written confirmation from the Department that the budget has been accepted. The Town expects to receive this confirmation in January 2021 and will prepare an additional and more detailed media release at that time.

Thank you.