

The 53rd meeting of the 13th Elected Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay was held on Thursday, February 8, 2024, and called to order by Mayor George Andrews at 5:03 pm.

Members Present:

Mayor George Andrews
Deputy Mayor Ella Wallace (Via telephone)
Councillor Hayward Broomfield
Councillor Jackie Compton Hobbs
Councillor Bert Pomeroy
Councillor Denise Rumbolt
Councillor Todd Winters

Also Present:

Chief Administrative Officer, Nadine MacAulay
Executive Assistant, Kathy Eddy
Municipal Engineer, Randy Dillon
Community Development Manager, Greg Osmond

Prior to the start of the Council meeting, Mayor Andrews proclaimed February 13th, 2024 as Wear Red Canada Day.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA OF THE 53rd MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Rumbolt and seconded by Councillor Broomfield to adopt the agenda of the 53rd meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. All in favour. Motion carried unanimously.

**2. Motion # 2024-02-01
LOADER LEASE EXTENSION**

It was moved by Councillor Pomeroy and seconded by Councillor Compton Hobbs to approve the Lease Extension for a 48-month term from Brandt Tractor for the John Deere P644 Loader. All in favour. Motion carried unanimously.

4. BUDGET SPEECH

As Chair of the Finance, Administration and Policy Committee, Councillor Bert Pomeroy delivered the Budget Speech.

- As the Chair of the Finance, Administration, and Policy Committee, it is my duty to present the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay's 2024 municipal budget.
- Our task is not an easy one, especially when addressing the challenges posed by a budget that carries with it austerity measures and tax implications. Nevertheless, it is important that we present the facts transparently, even when those facts weigh heavily upon us all.
- Our fiscal landscape has shifted, and the numbers do not paint a rosy picture. The revenue shortfalls are real, and the demands on our public services continue to grow. We find ourselves at a crossroads, where tough decisions must be made.
- However, let us not forget that challenges also present opportunities. As we navigate through these difficult financial times, we can seek creative solutions, explore partnerships, and find efficiencies. Our commitment to fiscal responsibility remains unwavering, even in the face of adversity.
- We had hoped to present this budget before the New Year, but we needed more time to explore all avenues so that the decisions we make, though difficult, are done in the best interest of the community as a whole.
- I want to express my thanks to Town staff who have helped in the preparation of this budget. Your patience and understanding is much appreciated.
- In order to achieve a balanced budget, which this year is set at \$15,587,673.04, we had two choices: postpone important and necessary water and sewer and other projects and services or raise revenues.
- This year's budget will see residential property taxes increase by 0.5 mils, bringing it from 7.25 to 7.75. The commercial property tax will increase by 1 mil.
- Our water and sewer infrastructure is the lifeline of our community, ensuring our health, safety, and well-being.
- Clean water is not a luxury; it is a fundamental right. Our water system provides safe drinking water, preventing diseases and promoting public health. Similarly, the sewer system ensures proper disposal of wastewater, preventing contamination and safeguarding our environment.

- Reliable water and sewer services are essential for economic growth. Residents and businesses rely on these systems. A malfunctioning sewer system, or issues with water distribution, can disrupt daily lives and impact our business community.
- Which brings us to the proverbial elephant in the room: inflationary costs. Over the past few years, we have witnessed a steady rise in expenses in all areas of the Town's operations, and we have had to make sacrifices. But we can't make sacrifices when it comes to maintaining and upgrading our water and sewer infrastructure.
- Here's why:
 - Our pipes, lift stations and pumps age over time. Repairing or replacing them becomes costlier as inflation erodes the Town's purchasing power.
 - The cost of materials – concrete, steel, pipes, wood, chemicals, and so on has increased dramatically, impacting our operational and capital expenses.
 - Environmental regulations evolve, demanding better treatment processes, monitoring, and compliance. Meeting these standards requires investments, which are subject to inflation.
- In order to keep up with the demands placed on us by rising inflation, and to ensure we continue to provide safe and efficient water and sewer systems, this budget will see the annual water and sewer tax increase by \$48 per year, or \$4 a month. As well, metered water rates will increase by 35 cents and sewer rates will increase by 25 cents per 1,000 gallons.
- The budget also appropriates funds for wage increases for Town employees.
- Council remuneration will be frozen under this budget, pending a change in policy that will see the elimination of increases related to the "Cost of Living".
- The business tax, as well as all other fees, will remain unchanged.
- Aside from much-needed upgrades to parts of our water and sewer infrastructure, this budget will also allow for the reconstruction of the Loring Drive and Hamilton River Road intersection.
- Under this budget, the Town will continue to provide a discount on property taxes that are paid early. The discount rate set for 2024 is 3 percent.
- We realize the tax relief measures presented in this budget may not go far enough to alleviate the financial burden on vulnerable populations, particularly those on fixed incomes – and that further efforts need to be made to prioritize assistance for those who may struggle to keep up with increased costs. As a result, the thresholds for the low-income relief program will increase by 2 per cent. In other words, residential property owners with a household income of \$26,322 or less will receive a 100 per cent property tax discount. On the high end, property owners with an annual household

income of less than \$48,639 but more than \$41,200, will receive a 25 per cent discount on their property taxes.

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- I should note that this low-income tax relief policy is amongst the most generous in the country.
- As I stated from the onset, we have two choices: increase revenues, or postpone and/or eliminate projects and reduce services.
- In conclusion, presenting a municipal budget always presents challenges, with tough decisions to make and a constantly shifting fiscal landscape. This budget has been no exception, and we have worked hard to find a balanced approach that maintains fiscal responsibility while prioritizing critical projects that impact public health and safety.

Thank you.

3. BUDGET 2024

Resolution #2024-02-02 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the 2024 Municipal Budget for the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay as per *Section 77 of the Municipalities Act, 1999* with total revenues of \$15,587,673.04 and total expenditures of \$15,587,673.04. Moved by Councillor Pomeroy and seconded by Councillor Rumbolt. Councillor Compton Hobbs voted against. All others voted in favour. Carried.

2024 MUNICIPAL TAX RATES AND FEES

Resolution #2024-02-03 Property Tax

Be it resolved that pursuant to *Section 112 of the Municipalities Act, 1999*, the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve one uniform Property Tax Residential mil rate of 7.75 mils, Property Tax Commercial Rate of 12.0 mils and a Minimum Non-Vacant Property Tax Rate of \$50.00 as set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Taxes and Rates**, Policy Number: **F0001** as the property tax for 2024. Moved by Councillor Pomeroy and seconded by Councillor Broomfield. Councillor Compton Hobbs voted against. All others voted in favour. Carried.

Resolution #2024-02-04

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Be it resolved that pursuant to *Section 112* of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*, the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve the Minimum Vacant Commercial Property Tax of \$3,750.00 as set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Taxes and Rates**, Policy Number: **F0001** as the property tax for 2024. Moved by Councillor Pomeroy and seconded by Councillor Winters. All in favour. Carried unanimously.

Resolution #2024-02-05
Water and Sewer Rates

Be it resolved that pursuant to *Section 130* of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*, the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve the Sewer Tax Rate of \$327.00 per year and the Water Tax Rate of \$256.00 per year, as set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Taxes and Rates**, Policy Number: **F0001** and **Water and Sewer Rates**, Policy Number: **F0008** as the water and sewer rates for 2024. Moved by Councillor Winters and seconded by Councillor Rumbolt. Councillor Compton Hobbs voted against. All others voted in favour. Carried.

Resolution #2024-02-06

Be it resolved that pursuant to *Section 130* of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*, the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Water Metered Rate of \$3.85 per 1000 gallons of water consumed and the Metered Sewer Tax Rate at \$2.25 per 1000 gallons of water consumed, for clients using water meters, as set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual titled **Taxes and Rates**, Policy Number: **F0001** and **Water and Sewer Rates**, Policy Number: **F0008** as the water meter rates and sewer meter rates for 2024. Moved by Councillor Winters and seconded by Councillor Broomfield. Councillor Compton Hobbs voted against. All others voted in favour. Carried.

Resolution #2024-02-07
Business Tax

Be it resolved that pursuant to *Section 120* of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*, the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the **Business Tax Rates** as set

out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Taxes and Rates**, Policy Number: **F0001** as the business tax rates and utility tax rate for 2024. Moved by Councillor Winters and seconded by Councillor Rumbolt. Councillor Compton Hobbs voted against. All others voted in favour. Carried.

Resolution #2024-02-08
Town Fees for Services and Equipment Rental

Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Arena Fees set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Arena Fees**, Policy Number: **F0002** for 2024. Moved by Councillor Broomfield and seconded by Councillor Winters. Councillor Compton Hobbs voted against. All others voted in favour. Carried.

Resolution #2024-02-09

Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Ballfield Rental Fees set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual titled **Ballfield Rental Fees**, Policy Number: **F0003** for 2024. Moved by Councillor Broomfield and seconded by Councillor Winters. All in favour. Carried unanimously.

Resolution #2024-02-10
Miscellaneous Rates

Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Miscellaneous Rates set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Miscellaneous Rates**, Policy Number: **F0005** for 2024. Moved by Councillor Compton Hobbs and seconded by Councillor Pomeroy. All in favour. Carried unanimously.

Resolution #2024-02-11

Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Municipal Rates – Equipment Rates set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Municipal Rates – Equipment Rates**, Policy Number: **F0006** for 2024. Moved by Councillor Compton Hobbs and seconded by Councillor Rumbolt. All in favour. Carried unanimously.

Resolution #2024-02-12

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Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Animal Control Services Rates set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Cost of Animal Control Services**, Policy Number: **F0007** for 2024. Moved by Compton Hobbs and seconded by Councillor Winters. All in favour. Carried unanimously.

Resolution #2024-02-13**Property Tax (Residential and Business) and Business Tax Exemption**

Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Property Tax Low Income Relief Policy, Business and Property Tax Non-Profit Organizations and Groups Exemption Policy, Doctors Property Tax Exemption, and Young Entrepreneurs Business Application and Business Tax Exemption as set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Property Tax (Residential and Business) and Business Tax Exemption**, Policy Number: **F0009**. Moved by Councillor Rumbolt and seconded by Councillor Compton Hobbs. All in favour. Carried unanimously.

Resolution #2024-02-14**Recreational Property Tax Rebate Policy**

Be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay approve and adopt the Recreational Property Tax Rebate Policy as set out in the Policy and Procedures Manual, titled **Recreational Property Tax Rebate Policy**, Policy Number: **F0010**. Moved by Councillor Rumbolt and seconded by Councillor Pomeroy. All in favour. Carried unanimously.

Mayor Andrews acknowledged Minister Trimper's absence in the Gallery tonight and said that he received a message from him congratulating Council on passing the Budget. On behalf of Council, Mayor Andrews passed along prayers and well wishes to him and his family.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councillor Compton Hobbs and seconded by Councillor Rumbolt. Meeting adjourned at 5:49 PM.

MAYOR GEORGE ANDREWS

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER NADINE MACAULAY