

## Council approves budget to maintain services, focus on community safety

(Penticton, BC – November 23, 2023) – Council has approved the 2024 budget including a 5.31 per cent tax increase which would see residential property owners pay an average of \$8.90 more per month and commercial property owners pay an average of \$34.50 more per month.

Council will receive the 2024-2028 Financial Plan Bylaw for first three readings at their Regular Council Meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

“Balancing the need to maintain service levels that residents expect from the City and also recognizing the difficult financial times we find ourselves in has made this a challenging budget process,” says Mayor Julius Bloomfield. “Council has established four priorities that this budget continues to support, particularly around community safety, housing and ensuring the City’s infrastructure is maintained.

“But we also recognize the need to keep taxes as low as possible and that is why council chose to stay the course to repay the taxes deferred on the original timeline, which allowed us to reduce the proposed increase by three per cent.”

In 2022, the previous Council made a major commitment to public safety but, recognizing the tough economic times of the day, the decision was made to defer the immediate tax increase and scheduled them to be phased in over three years. This year’s proposed budget recommended phasing the deferral over two years. Council chose to stay with the original three-year plan.

The budget includes an increase of 2.31 per cent to meet operational expectations, inflationary pressures and contractual obligations, as well as a less than one percent increase to meet the strategic priorities of Council.

Highlights include:

- Proposed creation of a Director of Public Safety and Partnerships to lead the recommendations made in the City’s Community Safety Review
- RCMP will implement the Integrated Crisis Response Team (ICRT) Program and assign dedicated RCMP personnel to the program
- Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Grant application to the Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) to support key housing initiatives and deliberate growth in Penticton
- Community Centre energy efficiency upgrades to advance the City’s Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP)
- Advanced Waste Water Treatment Plant (AWWTP) Phase 2 expansion and upgrades
- City Yards facility upgrades which will incorporate recommendations made in the Electric Utility Reliability and Resiliency Study

- Sports and Recreational needs assessment to guide short and long range planning to meet the needs of user groups and residents of Penticton

Council will make a decision on the business multiplier in April, after the latest property assessments are received

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