

For Immediate Release

TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES 2019-2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

(Antigonish, Nova Scotia) – Today, Antigonish Town Council approved a \$10.67 million in total municipal expenditures and a capital plan of \$3,087,400 as part of the 2019-2020 municipal budget.

In its commitment to sustainability and exploring and expanding its green energy portfolio, the Town has received a \$1,111,000 dividend payment from its partnership in AREA (Alternative Resource Energy Authority). In this partnership with the Town of Berwick and Mahone Bay, the Town of Antigonish owns 63 percent of a seven-turbine wind farm that was built to combat rising power costs and to achieve green energy targets set by the province of Nova Scotia.

Transfers from the Town's operations make up \$1,250,400 of the capital project plan. Additional funds from the Town for the total capital budget include \$711,000 Federal Gas Tax Transfer, \$50,000 in federal funding for accessibility, \$335,000 from the Town's capital reserves and \$845,000 in external fundraising and support for the All-Wheels Skatepark and "The Sandlot" Accessible Baseball Field projects.

Council unanimously approved the budget with no increases to the residential tax rate. Sewer rates will be increasing from .509 to .609 percent, which will result in an increase of \$8.19 on the average resident's quarterly water bill. The increase has been added to address the depreciation cost of the Town's aging sewer infrastructure. The funds collected from this increase will be used to conduct repairs or replace sewer lines as it is required. The residential curbside waste collection rate will also be increasing \$8.14 per equivalent unit per year, because of a significant reduction in the Town's recycling disbursement grant.

"I am very pleased of council's commitment to the budget process and I believe this year's result has a lot of positive outcomes for the Town of Antigonish in 2019-2020," said Mayor Laurie Boucher. "Our extensive capital project plan has a lot of focus on increasing accessibility and safety of our roads and sidewalks, as well as the completion of two major recreation hubs for our community with the All-Wheel Skatepark and the Challenger Baseball Field. Funds are being set aside in our capital reserves to look at future refurbishment of the Town's tennis courts and we are also excited about the potential partnership with the Municipality of the County of Antigonish to bring a dog park to our community."

Key Projects & Capital Investments:

- \$316,000 investment to improve the safety and accessibility of sidewalks
- \$697,000 investment in street and parking lot paving
- \$17,000 potential partnerships with the Municipality of the County of Antigonish for Active Transportation Plan and a dog park
- \$35,000 flood mitigation efforts

Community Service:

- Continuing to support local community groups and events through the Town's Community Grant Program.
- Investments in key community programming such as Antigonish Community Transit, Antigonish Heritage Museum, and St. Martha's Regional Hospital Foundation
- Investments in projects and planning for major events attraction that benefit the Town

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