



MEDIA RELEASE

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF FORT ERIE
1 Municipal Centre Drive
Fort Erie, ON
L2A 2S6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: February 21, 2020

MEDIA CONTACT: Janine Tessmer, Communications Advisor

TELEPHONE: 905-321-4436

Fort Erie Town Council Approves 2020 Operating and Capital Budgets

Fort Erie Town Council approved the 2020 Operating Budget with an increase of 1.55 per cent for an overall residential property tax increase of 2.47 per cent when combined with Niagara Region and the Boards of Education levies.

“Town Council is committed to maintaining and expanding services to our community while maintaining one of the lowest municipal tax increases in Niagara,” said Mayor Wayne Redekop. “This year’s budget is focused on allocating the appropriate resources needed to fuel economic development in Fort Erie by making it shovel-ready for new developers and incoming businesses. In addition, we will be focusing our efforts on ensuring the EJ Freeland Community Centre remains a community landmark for residents and service providers now and into the future.”

The town's portion of the increase included:

- \$554,000 (2.0 per cent) to capital reserves to address long-term capital asset funding;
- \$273,000 (1.0 per cent) for additional staffing;
- \$200,000 (0.7 per cent) for industrial land development; and
- \$198,000 (0.7 per cent) for transit service enhancements.

The 2020 Operating Budget also included several one-time requests that will be funded from strategic reserves. For example, \$200,000 was included for tree removal related to the Emerald Ash Borer devastation and \$75,000 for a cannabis legislation, policy and by-law study.

“The 2020 Operating Budget takes advantage of a number of opportunities,” said Treasurer Jonathan Janzen. “In October, the Province announced that the funding Fort Erie receives from its Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund will increase slightly in 2020 to \$1.6 million. This grant is used to reduce overall taxes and a portion is also transferred into a Town reserve to fund current and future one-time needs. In addition, new Bay Beach admission and parking fees introduced in 2019 will be reinvested into maintaining and operating the beach this summer.”

In addition to the Operating Budget, Town Council approved the Town's Capital Budget and Forecast. The Capital Budget consists of 63 projects with a total cost of \$18.7 million and include works related to roads, bridges, sidewalks, water, wastewater, and Fire and Emergency Services.

Some of the larger Capital projects include:

- \$3.4 million (18.0 per cent) to build a newly amalgamated Fire Station #4
- \$1.5 million (8.0 per cent) for the Dead End Watermain Replacement program
- \$1.3 million (7.0 per cent) for the Bridge and Culvert program
- \$1.3 million (7.0 per cent) for the Roads Resurfacing program

Please visit the Town's website at forterie.ca for further details on the 2020 Budget.