

BUDGET PREAMBLE

Mayor and Council,

It is with great pleasure I present to you the 2017 Municipal Operating Budget. Despite the challenges being faced locally, provincially and nationally, we are confident in a bright secure future for our Town. We pride ourselves on our ability to provide service among the best in the Province at a cost that is lower than many of our peers. We are proud of the quality of life that Grand Falls-Windsor provides to its citizens and will continue to do our best to ensure this continues.

Our local economy remains active with both residential and commercial development. Total construction value for 2016 is estimated to be \$18,250,000. In adopting the proposed budget, Council is ensuring that we are on solid financial footing to ensure that Grand Falls-Windsor will remain the place to live and to do business for years to come.

Revenue

Total municipal revenue for 2017 is forecast to be \$18,400,000. Included in this is \$15,900,000 for taxation. The remaining revenue is derived from permits, fees, land rent, recreation fees and provincial transfers. I am pleased to announce that there is no tax increase included in the 2017 Budget. This is a significant accomplishment given our commitment to quality service in the face of increasing expenses. Grand Falls-Windsor will remain amongst the lowest taxed of large communities in the Province. To assist our growing number of seniors (65+), Council is offering a 5% discount for taxes paid prior to March 31st. In addition, seniors who qualify for income based discount will be eligible for an additional 20% discount. These measures provide \$184,800 in assistance to those who qualify.

Expenditures

Total expenditures forecast for 2017 is \$18.4 million. Included in these expenditures is \$1,366,000 for capital. This amount reduces our capital borrowing. We are forecasting a capital program of \$11.5 million, net borrowing of \$2.6 million and provincial contributions of \$7.7 million. Town share debt payment for 2017 is forecast to be \$1,617,000 resulting in a debt payment ratio 9.32%. This ratio is amongst the lowest in the Province.

Parks and Recreation

We anticipate 2017 to be another busy and exciting year for Parks and Recreation as we strive to make Grand Falls-Windsor the very best place to live. Total expenditures for Parks and Recreation are projected to be \$1,925,000. This past year projects completed include Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association Clubhouse, re-development of Centennial Field, the Memorial Grounds, Francis M. Nichols Center ventilation system and the beginning of the re-development of Scott Avenue Ski-Trail to a twelve (12) month facility. The plan for 2017 includes completion of ski-trail lighting, Clubhouse, and Mountain Biking Trail, Gorge Park development, and continued upgrades of our Parks and Recreations facilities. In addition, the Department of Parks and Recreation plan to provide expanded community programming and events. These include Concerts in the Park, Anti- Litter Campaign, Red Maple Festival, Mid-Winter Bivver, Salmon Festival, Summer Programs and other community events. Council is also pleased to advise there will be free admission for all skating events which includes general, family, adult, parent & tots, and senior. We encourage all citizens to take advantage of this service.

The Town of Grand Falls-Windsor values the contribution of community groups to the quality of life of our citizens. In partnership with these groups Council will provide continued support through community grants as follows:

- Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association - \$40,000
- Environmental Resource Management Association - \$6,900
- Exploits Regional Curling Club - \$15,000
- Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society - \$10,000

- AND Company Players - \$18,450
- Golf Course - \$25,000
- St. Joseph's Community Kitchen - \$1800

As well, the Town will provide \$54,500 in additional support to community sports and cultural groups. Council will continue to support Arts groups such as CNVAS, the Town Band, Northcliffe Drama Club, Kiwanis Music Festival and others. The department will support qualified individuals through grants for athletic and cultural endeavors. The Town will maintain the first time skaters programs for Minor Hockey and Sparkling Blades.

Economic Development and Tourism

The Town of Grand Falls-Windsor will continue to invest in economic development initiatives to help ensure a vibrant and growing economy for the future of our Town and region. The total allocation for 2017 is \$288,000. Council is committed to pursue all opportunities to strengthen and diversify our economy and to partner with provincial and federal agencies in our efforts. Specific initiatives include:

- In partnership with public and private stakeholders, make Grand Falls-Windsor a provincial hub to meet the health care needs of Newfoundland.
- Engage in business development activities to data center development in Grand Falls-Windsor.
- Continued building of capacity in establishing Grand Falls-Windsor as an internationally recognized research center.
- Continued implementation of age friendly strategy making Grand Falls-Windsor attractive as a retirement center.
- Promotion of Grand Falls-Windsor for retail development and as a tourism destination. Plans for 2017, include production of a promotional video highlighting the quality of life in Grand Falls-Windsor.

Engineering and Works

The Department of Engineering and Works provides the essential services required by the citizens of our community to live, work and enjoy life. These include roads and transportation, snow clearing, water and sewage, waste management, street lighting, fire protection and waste water treatment. Our 2017 Budget commits to continue to maintain the levels of service we now enjoy. Engineering staff provide direction and planning for all capital work. In addition, this department oversees the operation of the Water Treatment Plant providing a safe, reliable drinking supply for over 21,280 people including Botwood, Bishop's Falls, Peterview and Northern Arm. Total funding for Public Works and Water Treatment Plant is \$6,762,000 for 2017 operations.

Capital Projects

Total capital works planned for 2017 is \$11.5 million. Town share of this funding is \$3.8 million with the remainder provided by cost sharing agreement with the provincial government.

Work planned for 2017 includes:

- Street resurfacing
- Construction of Cross Country Ski Chalet and Ski Trail development
- Lincoln Road water & sewer replacement
- Second Avenue phase 2 water & sewer replacement
- Water & sewer upgrades
- Vehicle and equipment replacement
- Goodyear Avenue Park upgrades
- Centennial Park upgrades
- Gorge Park development – design work

Protective Service

The safety and protection of our citizens is essential to the quality of life of our citizens. This includes fire protection, municipal enforcement and animal control. Council is committed to maintain our level of service in this area. We have allocated \$973,170 to provide for this in

our 2017 Municipal Operating Budget. Council is very grateful for the dedication and readiness provided by the volunteer members of the Grand Falls-Windsor Fire Department. Through their training and commitment, it is recognized as one of the very best in the Province. It is Council's intent to maintain our investment in the Fire Department to ensure our high standards of service is maintained.

Conclusion

Mr. Mayor, We are proud to present the 2017 Municipal Operating Budget. We believe this budget to be a fair estimate of costs necessary to provide the services essential to the continual quality of life our citizens demand, expect and deserve. We are proud to be able to deliver these services with no increase in taxation as a result of our good governance and stewardship. We are well positioned to continue this in the present and future.

I proudly move adoption of the 2017 Municipal Operating Budget.

Tom Pinsent – Chair Person
Finance and Administration Committee
Town of Grand Falls-Windsor