

In this issue....

- Message from Council
- Budget Highlights
- Operations and Capital
- Important Dates to Remember

Municipal Budget

2023-24



THE MUNICIPALITY
OF THE COUNTY OF

LA MUNICIPALITÉ
DU COMTÉ DE

RICHMOND

**Continuing to Invest in our Communities,
Infrastructure, and Growth for all of Richmond County**

2023-24 Municipal Budget

Continuing to Invest in our Communities, Infrastructure, and Growth for all of Richmond County

Richmond County Council approved its 2023-2024 budget at a Special Council meeting on June 1, 2023, resulting in no increases to either the residential or commercial tax rates. The budget comes in balanced at just over \$16.8 million with strategic investments in communities, health, infrastructure and growth.

We were faced with a significant increase in mandatory contributions for services such as policing and education. The pressure created by these expenses (which Council must pay to the province) was offset by the increase in property values over the last year.

We recognize that the practice of holding the line on our tax rate year after year is not sustainable as we face a triple threat of rising costs, aging infrastructure, and a declining population. However, we have been able to avoid a tax rate increase this year due to the jump in property assessments which will result in an increase in revenue to the municipality. Although Richmond County continues to have one of the lowest tax rates in the province, we recognize that the increase in property values will be difficult for some people to bear, so Councillors unanimously agreed that a tax rate increase was out of the question this year.

In this budget, Council will make investments in personnel, adding critical resources to Information Technology/Cyber Security and Community Engagement. Through these investments, we're committing to keeping our digital operations and constituent data safe, and to following through on our promise to support communities.

There is good news in this year's budget for many community groups who contribute hundreds of volunteer hours each year to their communities as the grants and contributions program has been slightly increased and will be open for applications throughout the year. We felt it was a priority to continue to make funds available for community projects so we can fund them as opportunities arise, and enable groups to leverage funding from other sources.

The budget also includes significant investment in healthcare on items such as Physician Recruitment, Seniors Safety and Social Inclusion, the Cape Breton Regional Cancer Centre, and Hospital Foundations. Health and wellness must continue to be a focus to ensure that our residents have access to affordable programs and services.

Our aging infrastructure demands attention to ensure continued service that is environmentally sound and accessible. This budget advances several projects that will serve communities throughout Richmond County including assessing our arena, Rick Hansen certification of municipal buildings, and equipment investments to ensure service at our waste facility and water/sewer facilities remains safe and uninterrupted.

There is great opportunity on the horizon for Richmond County, and through this budget we are readying for growth by investing in the things that improve quality of life for everyone who lives here. Please reach out to your local councillor if you have any questions about the 2023-2024 budget. Our municipal staff is also ready to help if you have questions about your tax bill / payments.



L-R, Deputy Warden and District 5 Councillor Brent Sampson, Warden and District 4 Councillor Amanda Mombourquette, District 2 Councillor Michael Diggdon, District 3 Councillor Melanie Sampson and District 1 Councillor Shawn Samson



2023-24 Municipal Budget

Continuing to Invest in our Communities, Infrastructure, and Growth for all of Richmond County

On Thursday, June 1, 2023, Richmond County Council unanimously approved the \$16,883,170 fiscal budget for 2023-24.

The budget continues to be based on growth, fiscal responsibility and investing in the future and consists of five key components for the municipality which align to many of the pillars of our Strategic Plan :

01

INCREASE IN MANDATORY CONTRIBUTIONS & PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Mandatory contributions are amounts that we must include in our budget for services, which include, among others policing and education. These contributions rose over \$255,000 last year alone. Adding in costs for other essential protective services, the number jumped to over \$400,000.

02

INCREASED REVENUE

Revenue increased mainly due to an increase in assessments nationwide. To this end, council has determined to hold the tax rate for this year. User Fees for Recreation/Arena will not increase, nor the landfill, however there will be a slight increase in sewer fees by 5%.

03

HEALTH, ACCESSIBILITY, AND WELLNESS

Consultations on a new multi-use complex, along with investing in accessibility to municipal facilities and multiple trails plans. Council continues to support recruitment of health care professionals and seniors safety and social inclusion

04

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Investment of \$70,000 to the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) - managed by the Cape Breton Partnership, leveraged with matching funds from the provincial government. A new shared Innovation and Economic Development Officer was hired for Richmond County and Port Hawkesbury last year to focus on large projects

05

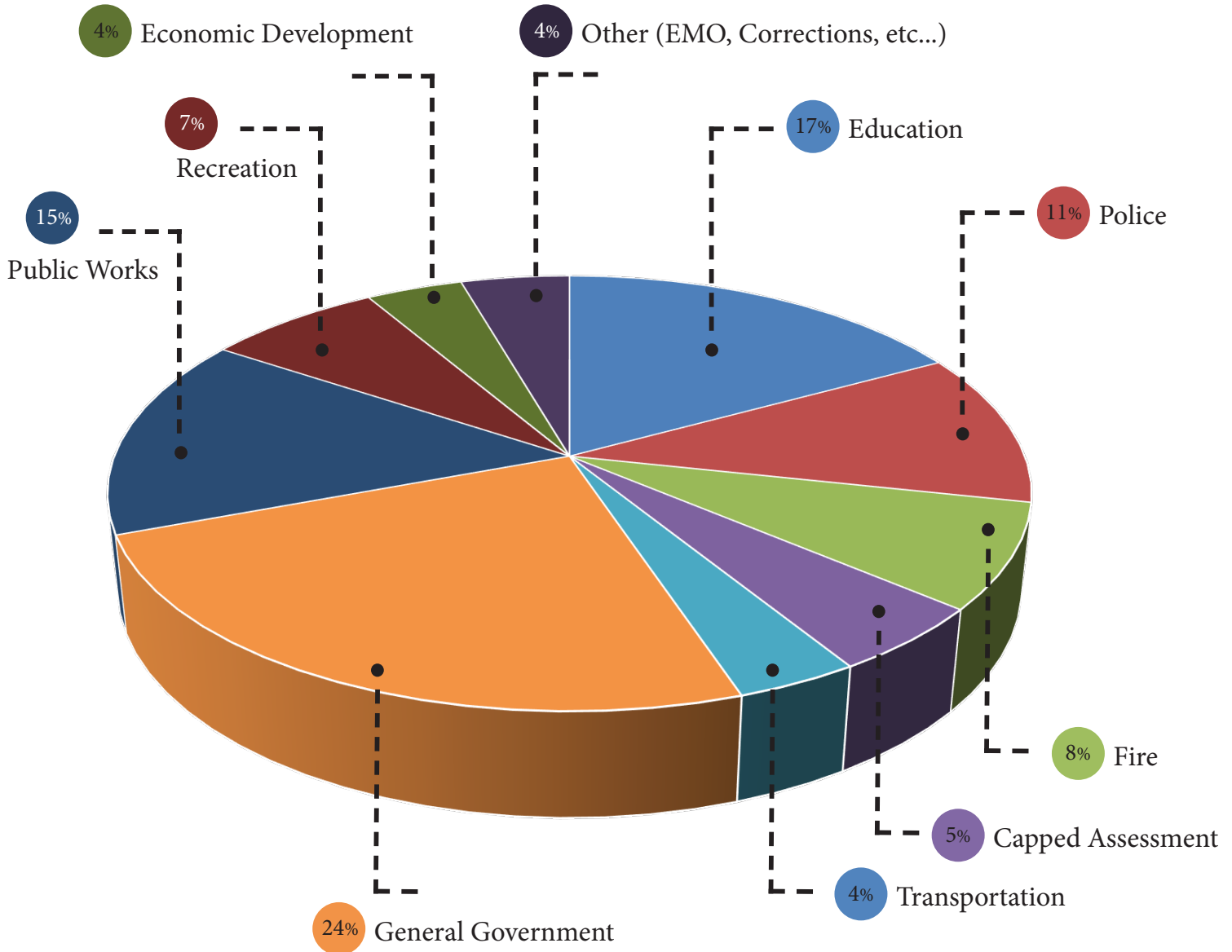
COMMUNITY/INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

Funding Contribution investments of \$356,000.00 which includes \$64,295 of Community based grants available through applications, and Canada Day Funding. By-Law Tax Exemptions of \$403,000 to Community Organizations.

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Budget Distribution



Mandatory Contributions account for 30.7% of Expenses
 - All mandatory contributions are determined by the Province of Nova Scotia
 (such as police, education, corrections, valuation services, etc...)



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2023-24 MUNICIPAL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Revenue

Tax Rate will remain unchanged for 2023-24 at \$0.85 Residential and \$2.15 for Commercial / \$100 of Assessment.

Residential Tax will increase from \$5,930,334 to \$6,618,396.

Commercial Tax will increase from \$2,550,276 to \$2,752,903.

Deed Transfer is expected to increase from \$650,000 to \$800,000.

Increase in Grants in Lieu from \$2,232,860 to \$2,477,627.

Expenses

Protection services will increase from 3,382,559 to \$3,645,487 to reflect increases in both the Police contract, increases in assessments for fire protection and increases in EMO (Emerg. Mgmt) /Fire costs.

Transport Services will increase from \$583,110 to \$623,943 for road maintenance and street lights program.

Environmental Health will increase from \$2,231,326 to \$2,535,285 due to increase costs of maintenance at the Solid Waste Facility, trucking and disposal fees, along with new regulatory changes from the Province.

Recreation and Community Relations will increase from \$1,014,930 to 1,222,658 to complete the new multi-use facility feasibility study, new hire to concentrate on community development and special projects, one additional seasonal staff person for the Arena and upgrades for the St Peter's Library Project.

Rick Hansen Certification Process continues with three of our facilities, with certification to follow in the Fall of 2023.

\$356,000 invested into Funding Contributions for Community Development and Health

\$225,000 for a new backhoe at the Solid Waste Facility

\$110,000 for new snow removal equipment

\$100,000 for Accessibility upgrades at municipal facilities

\$100,000 for sewer upgrades and renewal

\$100,000 for a bulk water filling station

\$86,000 allotted for paving on Marchand Lane (\$46,000 is Municipal contribution)

\$50,000 for Trail Rehabilitation and improvements

\$40,000 for further water front development

\$25,000 for an EV (Electric Vehicle) charger at the Municipal office

\$20,000 for Active Transportation Trails

\$15,000 committed for the Online Interactive Trails Map Project



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Important Dates

Property billing

Interim tax bills are issued on April 1 and due June 1; Final tax bills are issued September 1 and are due November 1.

All taxes not paid by the due date will accrue interest at a rate of 18 per cent per annum (1.5% per month).

Water and Sewer Billing and Interest Rates

Water and Sewer Bills are issued quarterly on June 30, September 30, December 31, and March 31. They are due one month from the bill date and will accrue interest at 18% per annum (1.5% per month).

If you have any billing questions please contact the Finance Department Tax Office at 902.226.2400

Notice of Assessment info

For questions or concerns regarding your Property Tax Assessment, please contact Property Valuation Services Corporation at 1.800.380.7775 or inquiry@pvsc.ca



Municipality of the County of Richmond Grant Program - Grant Types 1, 2 and 4

Richmond County Municipal Grant Program
Deadline is March 31st of each year.

- Type 1, Section A – Infrastructure – 50% of costs, Maximum of \$5000 per application.
- Type 2, Section B – Start-Up Activity – 50% of costs, Maximum of \$500 per application.
- Type 4, Section D – Regional/Health/General – Maximum of \$10,000 per year, per application.

Recreation Grant Program Deadlines - Grant Type 3

Recreation Grant Program
Deadline is March 31st of each year.

- Section C1 – Physical Activity – 50% of costs, Maximum of \$1000 per application.
- Section C2 – Instructor/Facilitator Development – 50% of costs, Maximum of \$500 per application.
- Section C3 – Sponsorships – Maximum of \$500.
- Section C4 for Canada Day – Maximum of \$3000 per district

Recreation Trails Grant Program
Deadline is July 2023

- Multi-Use and Shared-Use Pathway Creation, Rehabilitation and Improvement – Maximum of one application per organization.

**For more information please visit
www.richmondcounty.ca**