

# Municipal Budget

## 2024-25

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THE MUNICIPALITY  
OF THE COUNTY OF  
**RICHMOND**

LA MUNICIPALITÉ  
DU COMTÉ DE  
**RICHMOND**

**Delivering on our commitment  
to investment in our Communities, Infrastructure,  
and Growth for all of Richmond County**

*Delivering on a commitment to investment in our Communities, Infrastructure, and Growth for all of Richmond County*

Richmond County Council approved its 2024/2025 budget at a Special Council meeting on June 13, 2024, resulting in NO INCREASES to either the residential or commercial tax rates. Although Richmond County continues to have one of the lowest tax rates in the province, Council recognized that the increase in assessment values, combined with other inflationary costs, are creating an affordability challenge for many of our residents; so Councillors unanimously agreed that a tax rate increase was not possible this year. The budget comes in balanced at just over \$17.4 million.



*L-R, 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 and Deputy Warden Shawn Samson*

Highlights of the budget include funds for community grants to support local projects, landfill investment to ensure compliance with environmental regulations, and planning for future improvements in cellular coverage. With regards to cellular coverage, Council has set aside capital budget funds in an effort to leverage provincial and federal dollars to improve service in the Dundee/West Bay area. Cellular coverage is declining throughout the County causing safety and economic challenges.

Richmond County's 2024/25 budget is good news 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; this budget line funds projects that improve quality of life, and also enables groups to leverage funding from other sources to deliver even bigger projects to our residents.

Council has made further investments with regards to Public Works to prepare our water and sewer systems to function well in the face of increasing climate volatility and has continued to build capacity in this department to ensure high quality and safe drinking water to residents. The budget also supports for the 3rd year in a row, full time attention to our emergency management and fire services position which is an area that Council agrees continues to need dedicated focus.

Investments directly to health care facilities totalled \$50,000 including \$20,000 to the Cape Breton Regional Centre. An additional \$10,000 was provided to the Strait Richmond Palliative Care Society. Physician Recruitment and Seniors Safety and Social Inclusion investments totalled just over \$66,000 and Food Bank contributions were increased from \$10,000 to \$12,000 this year. Health and wellness continues to be a focus to ensure that residents have access to affordable programs and services.

Of the \$17.4 million budget, just over \$5.4 million (31.3%) are mandatory costs for things like policing, education and valuation services. On a budget that generates approximately \$104,500 in revenue for every one cent of tax charged, it creates a great deal of pressure on our ability to keep tax rates low. However, this year these costs were offset by cost savings realized through the revised service exchange agreement with the province along with the increase in property values over the last year.

It was a challenging time to develop a municipal budget that is facing the same kinds of inflationary pressures that are being faced by every household in our County, while at the same time working towards growing/improving services to residents. It took close collaboration with Council and staff to get to this point and we'll continue to work together to ensure that taxpayers dollars are invested strategically and responsibly.



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On Thursday, June 13, 2024, Richmond County Council unanimously approved the \$17,459,364 fiscal budget for 2024-25.

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 provincial services, which include, among others policing and education. These contributions rose over \$365,874.00 last year alone. Adding in costs for other essential environmental services, the number jumped to over \$600,000.

02

## INCREASED REVENUE

Revenue increased mainly due to an increase in property assessments nationwide. To this end, council has determined to hold the tax rate again for this year. User Fees for Recreation/Arena will not increase, nor the landfill. Sewer Rates have had to rise by 2% and after the Rate Review, Water rates also increased to offset increasing expenses to the Utility.

03

## HEALTH, ACCESSIBILITY, AND WELLNESS

The budget supports 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, seniors safety and social inclusion professionals.

04

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Council again invested \$70,000 to the Regional Enterprise Network (REN). Our Council, along with the Town of Port Hawkesbury, secured over \$800,000 in funding from the provincial and federal governments to explore development of a Centre of Excellence for Green Energy and to develop an assessment/strategy for our port infrastructure along the Strait, including Point Tupper.

05

## COMMUNITY/INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

Budget 2024-25 includes funding contributions to groups of \$299,500 with just over \$65,000 available to groups to apply for throughout the year. Additional tax exemptions for community organizations totalled \$420,954 and Council implemented a new \$200,000 budget line to support housing development/infrastructure and a low income tax rebate which will be launched in summer 2024.



## Community

Establishment of grants to groups totalling over \$190,000 through yearly applications and District Grants; and over \$1,166,000 allocated to our communities in the way of annual Funding Contributions.

Strategic Plan Refresh that has helped us plan and engage our communities/groups these last 2 years and added staff to see this through to success with enhanced Grant Activity, support and engagement.

Community Pasture Work

River Bourgeois Marina Improvements

Petit de Grat Harbour Improvements

Repairs to Loch Lomond hall

Improved access to the Municipal Building with sidewalk/driveway that extends to Ecole Beau-Port

Enlarged parking area at Babin's Hill Lookoff

Point Michaud Beach - new surf hut for storing our equipment and Mobi-mats installed at to aid in accessibility

10yr Fire Services contract for Point Tupper

New community engagement and special projects person to align to our Strategic Plan

Acquired over 300k in funds from ACOA to help our community centres upgrade their buildings or supplies to serve as shelters when the need arises.

## Growth

Provided financial support and leadership for the Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health



Committed to \$75,000 over 3 years to fund Centre of Excellence and Infrastructure projects. Our 75k that opened up over \$950,000 from other funding partners. Both projects are set to help the growing Green Energy/Hydrogen investment in our own Point Tupper.

Increased support and engagement with the Cape Breton Partnership/ CBREN in areas such as Sector Development, Business Investment and Attraction, Immigration Consultation, Marketing and Communications, Job Fairs and many more areas as well...

## Governance

Accountability - Added Question Period back to our meetings to better engage our citizens.

Established the practice of celebrating success and raising awareness publicly through council meeting acknowledgments and flag raisings.

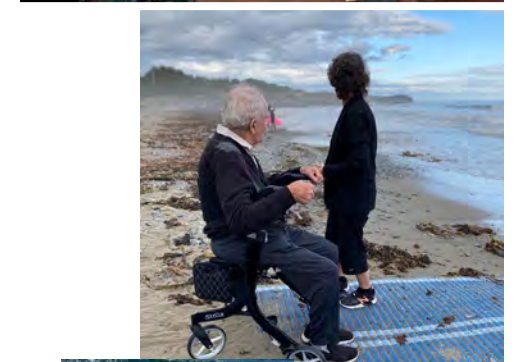
- Extensive policy and bylaw review
- 14 of policies reviewed and or updated
- 6 bylaws reviewed and or updated
- new policy for low income rebate
- new policy to assist housing developers with permits and infrastructure
- new communications policy
- new committee policy to better address a 5 person council and to increase accountability/reporting back to council

We have taken accumulated uncollected taxes from \$2.4M down to \$1.4M in just 3 years with increased tax sales.

Currently helping the province address cellular dead zones in our County - project is being led by Public Safety NS/DOJ (Dept of Justice)

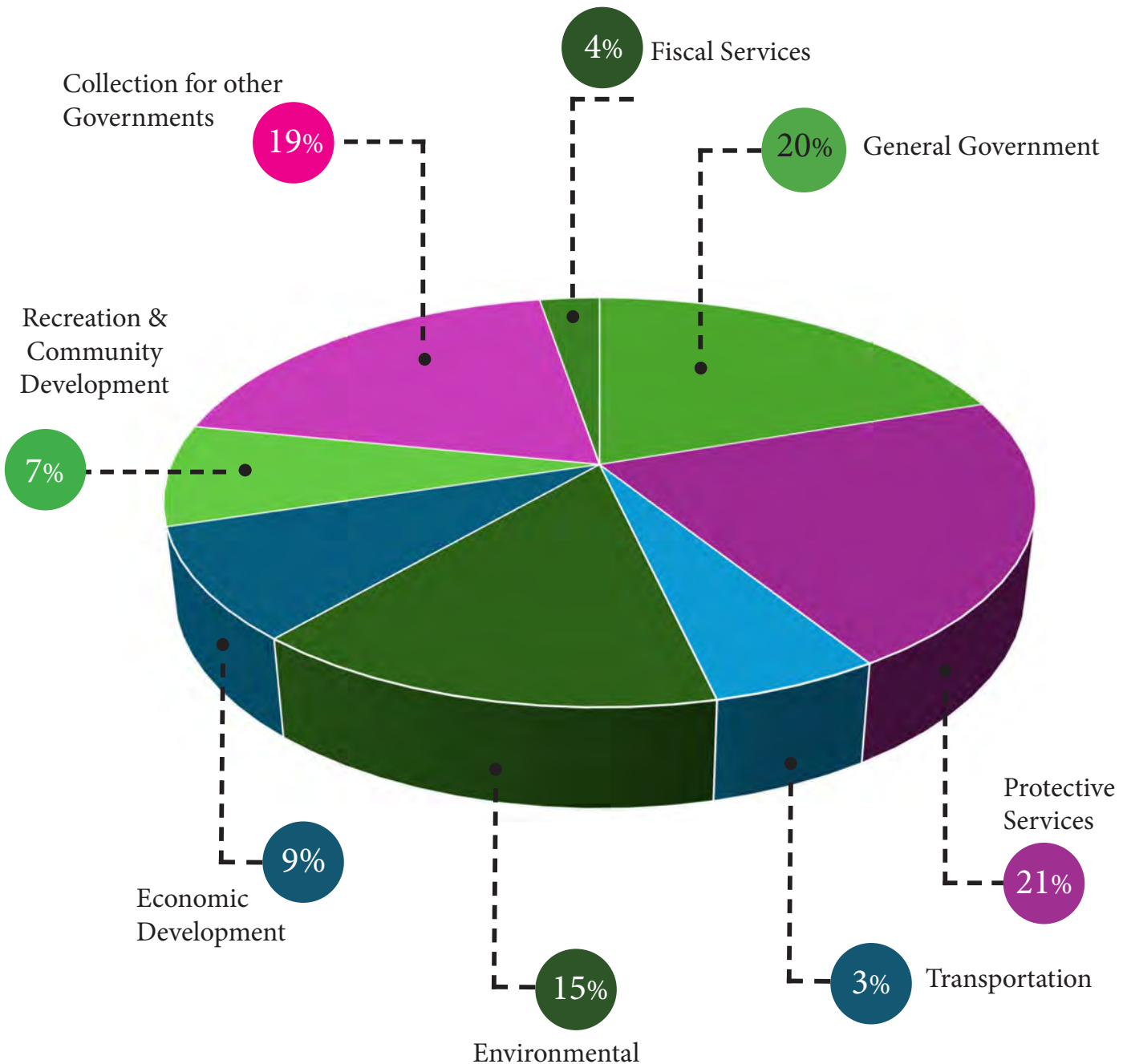
New IT professional to address IT shortfalls and modernize our business

Revamp of County website - more accessible, including dedicated section for seniors.



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## Expense Allocations for 2024/25 Budget



**Mandatory Contributions account for 31.3% of Expenses**  
 - All mandatory contributions are determined by the Province of Nova Scotia  
 (such as police, education, valuation services, etc...)



## 2024-25 Municipal Budget Highlights

### Revenue

Tax Rate will remain unchanged for 2024-25 at \$0.85 Residential and \$2.15 for Commercial / \$100 of Assessment.

Residential Tax revenue will decrease from \$6,618,396 to \$6,473,586.

Commercial Tax revenue will increase from \$2,752,903 to \$3,021,694.

Deed Transfer is expected to decrease from \$800,000 to \$450,000.

Increase in Grants in Lieu from \$2,477,627 to \$2,539,024.

*\* Unrealized revenue due to Capped Assessments reached \$1.8M this year - up from \$843k last year.*

### Expenses

Protection services will increase from \$3,615,487 to \$3,724,048 to reflect increases in both the Police Services contract and increases in assessments for fire protection.

Transport Services will be maintained at \$645,276 for road maintenance and street lights program.

Environmental Health will increase from \$2,530,168 to \$2,602,868 due to increase in operating costs of maintenance at the Solid Waste Facility, which include trucking and disposal fees, along with the financial impact of new regulatory changes from the Province.

Recreation and Community Relations will increase from \$1,220,658 to 1,395,714 to complete the multi-use facility feasibility study and upgrades at our Arena and for the St Peter's Community Hub Project.

Rick Hansen Certification process continues to improve accessibility in three of our facilities, with certification to follow.

### Additional Highlights

\$1.5M in landfill closure (West Arichat site)

\$800,000+ investment in water and sewer upgrades and maintenance

\$420,954 Tax Exemptions to Community Organizations

\$350,000 for new sidewalk into Admin building and beyond to Ecole Beauport (resurface of driveway as well)

\$299,500 in contributions to Community Organizations

\$150,000 in Accessibility upgrades at three municipally owned buildings

\$70,000 in trail development and improvements available via Grant Application

\$65,000 in grants available to the Districts and Community Groups via application

\$61,500 dedicated to repairs and improvements at the Richmond Arena

\$50,000 dedicated for waterfront improvements

\$20,000 dedicated to Active Transportation Trails



# 2024-25 Municipal Budget

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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](mailto:inquiry@pvsc.ca)



## Municipality of the County of Richmond Grant Program - Grant Types

### 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.
- Type 5, – Strategic Initiatives – 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 – Canada Day – Maximum of \$3000 per district

### Recreation Trails Grant Program *Deadline is July 26th, 2024*

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

For more information please visit  
[www.richmondcounty.ca](http://www.richmondcounty.ca)