

Town of Saltcoats

2023 Budget Update

Council has set the 2023 operating budget and it has a projected small surplus. The most difficult items we have to deal with are the cost of inflation, carbon tax and fuel costs. Over the past couple of years these expenses have driven up the costs of chemicals for the water treatment plant, the cost of materials, and fuel for paving projects, the cost of water line repairs and the cost of garbage/recycling pickup.

One of Council's top priorities is to continue the paving project in town. The last goal was a 10-year plan that would see the remainder of the town paved over a ten-year period. The 2023 paving plan will go ahead as planned this summer on the same basis as previous years with the selected street being determined, using multiple factors, including the condition of the current road, and how many water service lines remain to be replaced. The paving tender will be issued on Sask Tenders with work to be scheduled for this summer.

Council will temporarily put the 10-year paving plan on hold as we are actively searching for alternate ways to possibly fast tracking the paving for the remainder of the Town. The increase in paving costs being around 40% in the last two years and expecting yearly increases, carrying out the paving over a 10-year plan is not the most fiscally sound plan if we can get it completed in less time.

The base tax for several years has included \$175 toward our paving projects. We are increasing that amount to \$250 to cover increased cost for paving. Therefore, the base tax will now be \$1125, up from \$1050.

The garbage/recycling costs have increased approximately 30% over the last two years. Being an essential service, this is not something we can eliminate. Your utility bill will now include a \$10/month charge for garbage pickup and the \$5/month for recycling will remain. Council has decided to reduce recycling pickup to once every 4 weeks, instead of every 2 weeks. After discussion with several residents, Council felt the bins are large enough to hold 4 weeks of material if it is broken down properly. This may be inconvenient but we felt it is necessary to cut the cost of this service. These fees will only cover a portion of the costs for these services.

Council is happy to say that we were able to balance the budget without increasing our mill rate. It will remain at 10.2 mils for this year.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mayor and Council