

# TOWN OF HOLYROOD

## BUDGET 2024



A COMMUNITY OF CHOICE

Good evening your Worship, fellow Councillors, staff, and those joining us in-person and online.

On behalf of the Administration and Corporate Services Committee, it is my pleasure to present Budget 2024 for the Town of Holyrood

Your Worship, throughout 2023, Council has been focused on reviewing information, assessing operations, and determining priorities to develop the correct path for Budget 2024. The Town engaged in an operational review exercise and developed a new strategic plan which will launch us into 2024 with renewed vision and strengthened focus.

Our new strategic plan, Town of Holyrood - Community of Choice 2024-2027 officially adopted at our public meeting in August of this year, provides the foundation for our budget considerations. The new plan is based on six strategic priorities identified to ensure that Holyrood is a community of choice for residents and business, with sustainable programs and infrastructure, stewardship of financial resources, collaborative partnerships, and responsive and open local government. The six identified priorities will also allow us to measure our progress using appropriate measures. We are

excited to action the strategic goals and objectives, and Budget 2024 strengthens our path forward ensuring achievable goals which will benefit our residents.

Throughout the operational review and strategic planning process our residents spoke, we listened, and we heard. Combining the information gathered through the public consultation process with the research and evaluation of existing practises, Holyrood is now better prepared, determined and more focused to enter 2024.

Our priorities shaping this budget include Sustaining our finances; Building our infrastructure; Improving our programs and service; Growing our population and business base: Enhancing our quality of Life and Engaging with our community and other partners.

This budget is a budget for our residents. Council understands the pressures faced by our residents. Just as it is costing homeowners more for the day-to-day running of their households, it's costing the Town more to deliver essential services and programs. With that reality before us, for Budget 2024 we focused on those expenditures which are required to operate the Town of Holyrood in the way which our residents deserve.

Mayor Goobie, Council colleagues, with the deepest respect for our residents and their desire to be members of the Holyrood community, tonight I present to you a balanced budget of 4 million, six hundred ninety-one thousand, three hundred forty dollars and fifty-four cents. (4,691.340.54) for the Town of Holyrood.

This budget has no tax increases. The mil rate will remain the same at 7 mills and there will not be any increase in our rates and fees. Council is dedicated to making decisions which improve the lives of our existing residents while ensuring we provide the perfect condition which invites new members to our community. We are listening to and following the directives of what we heard and therefore holding true to the recommendations of the operational review the mil rate will remain at its present level.

Council respects that our residents are living a reality of restraint and rising costs of living. In 2024 we will continue to assist our residents by providing a payment plan whereby residents can pay taxes over an eight-month period with postdated cheques without interest. Seniors receiving the GIS will receive a 20% discount on property tax. We will also reach out to those families who have a combined income of \$30,000 or less annually and

provide them with a 20% discount. These options are listed on your invoices, and we encourage residents to consider their best option and reach out to us.

This full budget document is an integral component of the future of Holyrood and its residents. Each department has generated a budget developed around a plan to ensure residents have prime services at the lowest cost possible delivered in the most effective and efficient manner.

The area of **General Government** enables the Town to engage qualified purchased and professional services such as legal, auditing, consulting, and engineering. Costs associated with property assessment services, after-hours services, council remuneration, and engineering experts as well as supplies and general maintenance are also components of this budget category.

The Town has included a budget contribution for public relations in this category. This allows the Town to provide funding to the breakfast program and other events at Holy Cross Elementary and Roncalli Central High School. Supporting our youth is key to a sustainable future for the Town of Holyrood.

Also included in this category of our budget we provide 10,000 for the Holyrood Public Library, a contribution for the Holyrood Foodbank & Little Pantries, funds to support scholarships as well as other local organizations requesting support throughout the year.

Council continues to make every effort to work closely with staff to effectively manage our finances through finding efficiencies in categories of this budget area. The General Government budget category has a broad stroke across the daily operations of our municipality including insurance costs, and some management and clerical salaries. This category consumes **\$937,257.35** of budget 2024.

***Protective Services*** deals with an extensive list of considerations including fire & emergency services, public safety sessions and prepared response to serious disasters resulting from climate change. Holyrood is not immune from the devastation caused by extreme weather events. We only have to look to recent disasters across our Province. Holyrood is our home; we must ensure we are prepared to protect and guard it. This year, in response to climate change and its possible effects, Council has established a disaster fund.

This fund will allow Holyrood to survive and be revived should a natural disaster cause damage in our community. The fund will continue to be funded annually at a rate reasonable for the budget year. It is important for Holyrood to take this proactive move right now when we are in transition into our new strategic plan.

In 2023, our Holyrood Fire Department has experienced growth both in its membership as well as in areas of training and certification. 2024 will see the introduction of a new rescue vehicle which is critical to the department. Holyrood received \$100,000.00 from the Department of Justice & Public Safety to acquire this vehicle. The remaining cost will be borne by the Town through its fiscal services category the costs of which are offset by the services agreements with areas outside the Town of Holyrood.

With the increased volume of emergency calls, this new vehicle will be a welcomed addition to improving emergency services to the town. Council is very proud of the work ethic of our career fire fighters as well as the volunteer members who put their lives at risk every time they answer the emergency call.

Training, professional work ethic and personal commitment are values demonstrated throughout the fire department. In 2024, we

hope to continue to improve training exercises as we further develop the training grounds allowing the fire fighters to take part in real time scenarios. Council & staff have applied for funding through a Collaboration Grant with the Provincial government to help achieve the completion of the grounds. The grounds will be a great asset in the town and will provide training opportunities to surrounding fire departments.

Protective Service has a budget of \$699,871.82 which includes 100,000.00 for the disaster fund.

***Transportation and Services*** enables the Town of Holyrood to provide reliable essential services to residents using the latest techniques. Technology fosters efficiency and effectiveness creating a foundation for improved planning, scheduling, and management. The department is structured to provide the core municipal services to the residents by applying best practices to all aspects of its operation in areas of water, sewer, roads, streetlights, and maintenance. This category encompasses many essential services which are vital to the residents of the Town. Budget 2024 shows improved investment in ditching, brush-cutting, and culvert replacement which will have a direct benefit to our residents. The



Transportation and Services budget area makes use of various funding programs such as the Multi-Year Capital Works, Gas Tax, and Investing in Community Infrastructure Program (ICIP) through our government partners. These programs enable us to make improvements and provide services. The Town of Holyrood has had tremendous success in satisfying the guidelines of the government programs and therefore we have received funding to complete major projects to support our infrastructure improvements. We will continue to work with our government partners to build safer, more reliable infrastructure systems for our residents without adding a financial burden to taxpayers.

Although Holyrood has a record of successfully acquiring funding, this category requires a significant amount of our annual budget. 2024 will see **\$1,305,774.29** assigned to this category to ensure we continue to provide and improve services to our residents.

Council and staff are focused on developing an asset management process which enables us to take care of the infrastructure today, - but will also allow for preventive maintenance and planning for security into the future. Planning and utilizing the

various infrastructure funding programs are recommended components of the strategic plan.

Presently Holyrood has active water and sewer improvement projects on-going. These projects will provide consistent, safe water to Holyrood and ensure our sewerage system has an up-to-date effective waste treatment plant. These projects will provide permanent improvements to overall town services.

In response to the priorities of the community and the Strategic Plan 2024-2027 in the Enhancing Quality of Life section, Council is now engaged in considering the need for a multipurpose facility to respond to the needs of residents, groups and organizations. Our goal is to offer our residents a place to gather, share occasions, entertainment, stories as well as experience events and build memories in a safe and comfortable environment.

My Council colleagues, we are all aware of the importance of the well being of our planet through our environmental footprint. Council continues to encourage recycling and composting. Our decisions in all departments across all activities are considerate of our responsibility of improving all areas of environmental stewardship and encouraging residents, businesses, and

community groups to make green living a part of their daily lives. It's all about taking small steps that can make a big difference. Together, we can produce less waste and create a greener and healthier environment.

***Environmental Health*** section of our budget provides for our waste collection through the Eastern Regional Services Board, addresses the required chlorine for our water system. This year Council is increasing the rebate to residents who avail of septic cleanouts. Council recognizes the cost of the clean out service has increased for our residents, therefore starting in 2024, those residents availing of that service and are following the requirements can request a rebate of 500.00. Environment & Health requires \$ 421,721.00 in 2024.

Our Youth demand that we act now to ensure the longevity of the world as we know it and provide them with the assurance of a future when they become the community leaders. The Town of Holyrood is committed to becoming stewards of good environmental decisions.

The title of Holyrood Strategic Plan is very profound yet very inviting "Community of Choice". Council recognizes the need to

have a dedicated plan forward in order to maximize our potential and grow our population. Holyrood is beautiful and has a bright and explosive future, but it needs to be nurtured and guided by careful and strategic planning. Our new Town Plan for 2023-2033 is in a stage of review and will be released for public consultation in the fall of 2024. This plan is built on the principles of growing our population, maximizing our land use and protecting green spaces.

Holyrood has capacity to grow and each month we continue to approve housing and business starts which will get us to where we want to be as a municipality. Council consistently looks for ways to encourage housing development by having an efficient approval process. Here at the Town, through our continuous commitment to improving how we do business, we are looking for way to reduce red tape while at the same time ensuring we are doing our due diligence in reviewing and approving applications. Staff work with applicants by assisting them with the application process and reducing the need for repeated changes. Council recognizes the need for various housing requirements such as smaller homes, senior living, and subdivision planning. These various housing requirements dictate attention to zoning and our Council continues

to work with our Planning department to assure we open possibilities for development.

Your Worship, a strong and vibrant business community is a vital part of any municipality and is another key element in sustaining development. In Holyrood we are working very hard to reach out to our local business community to assist them through the challenges of growing and sustaining their enterprise. Many of our businesses are beginning to respond and are finding value in talking and working with us. Council will continue to improve economic activity. We will continue to look to our developers to satisfy the gaps in our service delivery across all sectors including food services. Our commitment is strong, our vision is wide, and we will succeed as long as we keep that focus instilled in our strategic plan to make Holyrood a Community of Choice.

Our plea to our business community is to register with the Town- so many businesses continue to work in the shadow of the Town and therefore we are not a complete team, making it more difficult to achieve our goal to grow our business community which attracts new residents. Come join us, we can use your help in reaching our goals to attract new residents.

The Planning & Development category supports Oceans Holyrood Initiative – an economic generator in partnership with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and department of Industry, Energy and Technology. This initiative allows Holyrood to identify opportunities in the ocean sector and opens the town to new possibilities. Presently the Town is partnering with Econex and Marine Institute to complete a Community Workforce Evaluation which will identify skills required for clients at the Launch at Marine Institute. This will enable Holyrood to ensure they have a skilled labour force to answer the call when these opportunities become active creating meaningful jobs for residents.

***Planning & Development*** requires \$105,736.00

Mayor & Colleagues creating a sound and fair budget plan for a Town of any size requires a balancing act. We must look at all areas of our Town and make the investments that meet all the needs of residents, and this includes a comprehensive recreational sector. Holyrood may be small in number, but we are large in programming and activity. ***Our Recreation and Community Services*** Department provides a very successful recreation program. The programs and activities are very cognizant of the various differences

of ability and choice of our residents. Our activities and events capture a complete offering for every sector of our population- seniors, adults- youth and children. The programs and events are supported by efficient and professional infrastructure.

During the recent development of the strategic plan, residents spoke, and we listened, and we heard. Council will continue to ensure programming and facilities for recreation will be a priority of our Council. We want to promote healthy active living and we will continue to support improvements in recreation and culture by expanding our offerings and providing the required infrastructure. Council has identified an investment in designing mountain-bike and hiking trails. Residents and tourists alike have voiced their interest in this type of activity and we have a unique landscape and business opportunity to attract more visitors and residents by continuing to invest in this area. This portion of our budget requires **\$ 286,229.40**

Mayor Goobie and my committed council colleagues, 2023 has been a challenging year as we set out to take a moment to stop in time, evaluate where we are and plan to the future.

We asked our competent staff to stand with us and re-evaluate their goals, objectives and methods in a collective attempt to celebrate what we were doing great and change the things that needed changing. We, together with our residents wanted to improve how we did business and move forward to the future with a new energy. We have done it! We have completed our review and we have identified a way forward. With the professional eye of an independent consultant, we are now armed with a new road map to get us to the next level- and tonight, as I stand before you, I am pleased to be with you and our staff as we venture the path together.

I am proud to inform you and our residents that the process has begun, and we have already started the new journey. One key recommendation coming from the report provided was to reduce our debt ratio to 12.5% by 2026- well tonight I am happy to say our debt ratio in 2024 will be 13%. We are just 0.5% away from our 2026 goal!

We have a very healthy fiscal condition and as we look forward, we will be closing 5 loans on our books before 2026, so with



strategic spending and particular attention to borrowing – we will meet and exceed the expectation of debt reduction.

The ***fiscal services*** category of our budget accounts our borrowing but it also accounts for the portion of uncollectable taxes, discounts, and bank charges. This category has a total of 934,750.68 in 2024.

Together all expenditures in all categories of our budget total **\$4,691,340.54.**

Budgets must respond to expenses through its revenue streams within the organization. The largest contributor to the revenue of the Town is our tax system. The Town of Holyrood will collect a total of 4,024,605.54 through property, business, business property, water and sewer taxes. Goods and Services category of the budget refers to our revenue from recreation events as well as agreements to provide fire services to areas outside Holyrood and this category will contribute an additional 248,000.00; revenue for permits and fees as well as other local sources is projected to add an additional 157,000 to the town. There are also several government transfers including our operating grant which

contributes an additional 261,735. These revenue generators total **4,691.340.54** providing us with a balanced budget.

Our detailed budget will be available online on our website by Friday of this week and residents can review the categories and the revenue and expenses in a concise document.

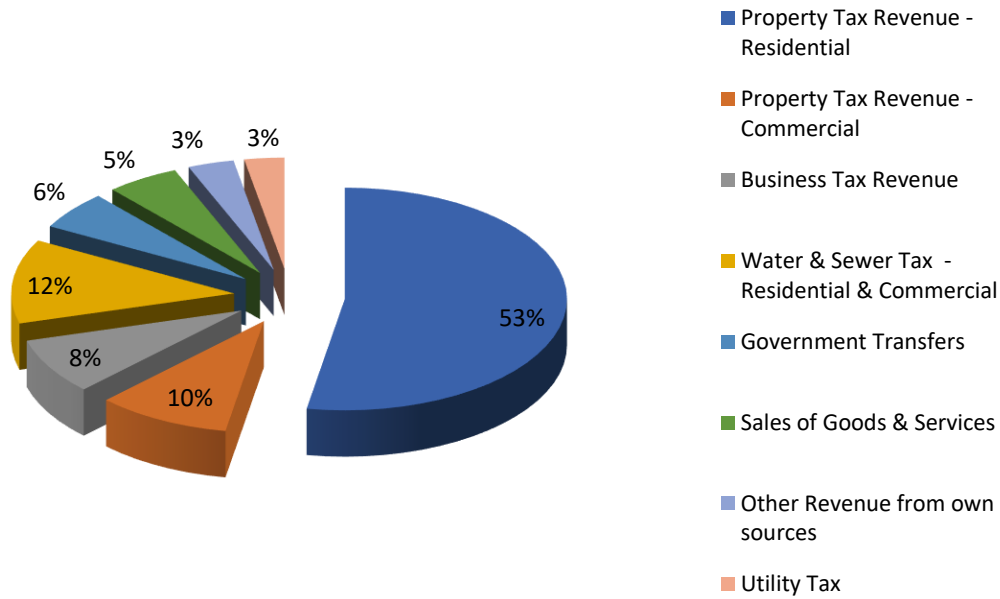
I want to take a moment to congratulate you Mayor and my colleagues as well as our staff for the completion of our annual budget for 2024. This is a collaborative document which has been developed through open dialogue amongst all council members, staff, and those who took advantage of the various public consultations. It is a good news budget and shows we are committed to the principles identified in the new strategic plan – Holyrood – A Community of Choice.

## **MOTION**

BE IT RESOLVED the Town of Holyrood, in accordance with the Municipalities Act Section 75-79 adopt the 2024 Budget with operating revenues and expenditures totaling \$4,691,340.54

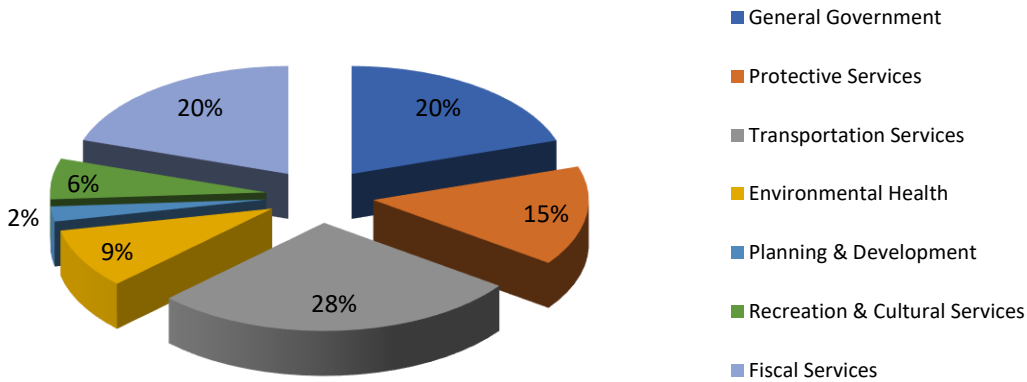
BE IT RESOLVED the Town of Holyrood, in accordance with the Municipalities Act Section 75-79, adopt the attached 2024 Schedule of Taxes, Rates and Fees to take effect January 1, 2024

## 2024 Revenue



2024 Revenue	
Property Tax Revenue - Residential	\$ 2,474,560.44
Property Tax Revenue - Commercial	\$ 457,183.60
Business Tax Revenue	\$ 382,316.48
Water & Sewer Tax - Residential & Commercial	\$ 574,802.20
Government Transfers	\$ 261,735.00
Sales of Goods & Services	\$ 248,000.00
Other Revenue from own sources	\$ 157,000.00
Utility Tax	\$ 135,742.82
	<b>\$ 4,691,340.54</b>

## 2024 Expenditures



**General Government**

**Protective Services**

**Transportation Services**

**Environmental Health**

**Planning & Development**

**Recreation & Cultural Services**

**Fiscal Services**

### 2024 Expenditures

\$ 937,257.35

\$ 699,871.82

\$ 1,305,774.29

\$ 421,721.00

\$ 105,736.00

\$ 286,229.40

\$ 934,750.68

\$ 4,691,340.54