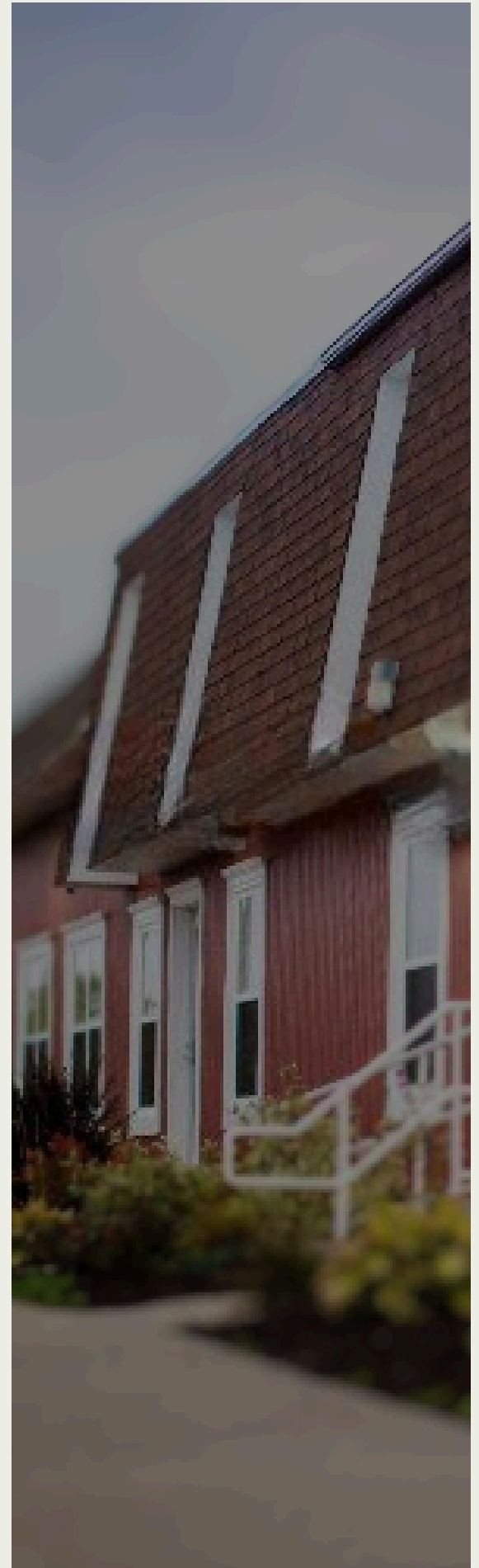


# Budget 2026

## **Our Core Commitments:**

- Promoting Financial Sustainability
- Investing in People & Community
- Strengthening Essential Services



Good evening Mayor Crawley, my Council colleagues and residents.

It is a truly humbling privilege to stand and address all of you as we enter the Christmas season. As we await the arrival of Santa and the start of a new year, this moment offers us a meaningful opportunity to pause and reflect on the year that is drawing to a close. 2025 has unmistakably made its mark on our history, shaping itself in bold and memorable ways. As we prepare to leave it behind, we recognize it as a year filled with both significant challenges and valuable opportunities.

None of us will soon forget the wildfires which invaded our town in August which caused many of our residents to be displaced from their homes and businesses to shut down. Our town, our people were very fortunate in that there was no devastating loss of life or structure as was experienced in the towns and communities in neighboring Conception Bay North.

On this night and with the season of rebirth and renewal closely approaching, we remember them and offer our support and good wishes.

What does not break us ultimately makes us stronger, and I believe that all of us — our towns and our communities — have emerged more resilient through the extraordinary outpouring of support and selflessness shown during this difficult chapter in our history. With all the stress and strain of rising costs, economic uncertainty, and the growing demand for essential services in our region, Council was required to plan with discipline and creativity, becoming more determined to strengthen our foundation for long-term prosperity.

Tonight, we present a municipal budget that is both fiscally responsible and firmly rooted in our community's priorities. This balanced budget of five million, two hundred five thousand, three hundred sixty-nine dollars and twenty-five cents (\$5,205,369.25) reflects months of careful analysis, public input, and collaboration across every department. Our goal is simple: to ensure that every dollar entrusted to us delivers value, strengthens our town, and prepares us for the future.

A balanced budget is more than a financial requirement—it is a promise. A promise that we will live within our means. A promise that we will safeguard essential services. And a promise that we will invest wisely in the long-term well-being of our community.

This budget reflects three core commitments:

### **Strengthening Essential Services**

Our first responsibility is to ensure the continuity and quality of core municipal services. This budget allocates funding for water and sanitation infrastructure, road maintenance, and waste management. We are prioritizing system upgrades that reduce service interruptions and improve efficiency, ensuring residents receive the reliable services they deserve. Activities include the replacement of aging infrastructure and improving our transportation system by addressing drainage issues and repairing roadways. Town-owned buildings, all facilities including outdoor facilities such as parks, the boardwalk and festival grounds are all responsibilities of the Transportation Services category of our budget. Given the magnitude of the activity associated with this department, including the permanent and seasonal staff, this category requires an infusion of \$1,716,572.48. This includes the purchase of a new wide-track backhoe and blade which will improve services to three notable areas: snow clearing in winter; ditching and drainage improvement in summer and water maintenance by providing the department with the capability of responding to and repairing water leaks.

Our Environmental Health component of the budget addresses our cost for garbage collection, as well as treatment to our water system including pumps and chlorination. This accounts for four hundred ninety-seven thousand, seven hundred twenty-one dollars (\$497,721.00).

The 2nd core commitment is:

### **Investing in People and Community**

A municipality is defined not only by its infrastructure, but by the character, commitment, and resilience of its people. We are committed to investing in community development initiatives, including continued programs for youth and seniors, support for small businesses, and enhancements to our library and recreational facilities. These investments aim to improve quality of life, foster social cohesion, and create pathways for economic opportunities into the future. Several of our budget categories influence Council's ability to realize this commitment.

This year we were boldly reminded of the importance of our protective services. Protective services reflect our investment in our fire department. This financial commitment includes salaries for our four career staff as well as training and incident

call stipends for both career staff and all 18 volunteers. With over 200 calls realized in 2025, each incident call was responded with competence, professionalism, and dedication. Your Council will continue to invest in this budget to ensure that, when needed, our Fire Department is fully trained and equipped to protect and serve every resident. Protective services require a contribution of six hundred thirty-three thousand, seven hundred twelve dollars and sixty-one cents (\$633,712.61).

Recreation & Cultural Services is a department fundamentally centered on people and their well-being. Our programs across all age spectrums are second to none as we continue to provide opportunities for healthy active living and social inclusion. Our activities and events are intentionally designed to strengthen community connections. We want to continue to hold fast to our values as we strive to build our community for the next generation.

Also included in this category is community outreach and communication. Your Council has improved its messaging to you – the resident. We have given you the opportunity to be more aware of things happening in your town. The Voyent Alert system has made a significant improvement in how we communicate with you; getting information to you wherever you are, so you are well informed. We continue to actively engage through our social media platforms and our quarterly flyers—ensuring that keeping you informed and supported remains our daily priority.

Recreation & Cultural Services requires three hundred ninety-seven thousand, three hundred ninety-two dollars and eighty-one cents. (\$397,392.81)

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> core commitment is:

### **Promoting Financial Sustainability**

This budget maintains a disciplined approach to spending; limiting non-essential expenditures and improving revenue collection. We are strengthening financial controls and implementing measures to reduce waste and increase transparency. Our goal is simple: a sustainable financial path that protects future generations from undue burden. In preparing this budget, we undertook extensive consultations with residents and businesses, using a range of engagement methods including a survey, an opportunity to present your ideas in person and an opportunity to reach out via email to offer your suggestions. Your feedback has shaped our priorities. This is truly a budget reflective of what you said. Over 100 people used the survey site this year; last year we had 16 people responding. Both Council and staff appreciate the time you took to offer your

suggestions and help guide our decision making. We received 3 written submissions- all of which were treated with respect and interest.

Honorable Mayor, while the challenges before us are real, so too are the opportunities. With careful stewardship, collaborative leadership, and a shared sense of purpose, we can build a municipality that is not only financially sound but vibrant, inclusive, and resilient.

Our General Government category is the engine of the organization from an operational perspective. The area of General Government enables the Town to engage in 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 comprise this budget category.

This category also allows the Town to provide funding to community groups, the breakfast program and other events at Holy Cross Elementary and Roncalli Central High School.

The General Government budget category encompasses much of the daily operations of our municipality including insurance costs, as well as some management and clerical salaries. This category consumes one million one hundred sixty-five thousand, five hundred seventy-five dollars and eighty-nine cents of Budget 2026 (\$1,165,575.89). This category also includes a contribution of \$100,000.00 into our disaster fund to protect the town in the event we experience a disaster of any kind. 2025 reminded us just how vulnerable we are when we encounter events beyond our control which threaten our town. We must be prepared to take constructive measures to ensure we can protect our people and rebuild this town of ours.

Our Emergency Preparedness Plan must be equipped to address potential disasters and ensure that the necessary resources are in place to support both our residents and the Town should such an event occur. This contribution of \$100,000.00 represents an investment in the security and peace of mind that you rightfully deserve.

Closely related to general government category is our Fiscal Services. Good fiscal management and effective long-term planning have seen a welcomed decrease in our Debt service ratio. Mayor, we have several infrastructure improvement projects being executed in town, which, when completed, will benefit every resident. Water and sewer projects, including a new, larger water tank, are all in progress. They take time, they take patience and they take funding. Holyrood is on a 90/10 split funding program for these

projects with our federal and provincial government partners. Your council borrowed the 10% required at a time when interest rates were lower and therefore, I am happy to report, there is no new borrowing for 2026, even as we see projects ramp up with increased activity. We have made significant progress in reducing debt in 2025, and I am pleased to report, Mayor, that our debt ratio entering 2026 stands at a low 8.0%. This is quite an achievement, and your council and staff remain committed to monitoring spending through 2026 to ensure our financial foundation is solid. The budget amount for fiscal services for 2026 is six hundred ninety-five thousand, one hundred sixty-one dollars and seventy cents. (\$695,161.70)

Continuous monitoring of department budgets, availing of all government funding programs and following a tight purchase order process has positively improved how the Town of Holyrood is using its resources to improve life for all residents for the long term. Our goal has always been — and will continue to be — to strengthen our town and ensure reliable services for all residents.

This leads me to our Planning & Development category of the 2026 Budget. Planning & Development allows us to prepare the town for growth in a constructive, effective manner protecting our values. Our new 10-year town plan has been submitted to the provincial government and discussions are taking place regarding moving this plan to adoption and implementation. It will guide our growth and present opportunities for people to come join our community. This category allows us to promote small businesses, to market our town as a place to hang a shingle and be a member of our business community. This category accounts for ninety-nine thousand two hundred thirty-two dollars and seventy-six cents of our budget. (\$99,232.76)

The budget is accompanied by an ambitious plan to positively affect life in the Town of Holyrood. To achieve our goals, Council must be secure in its revenue stream.

Mayor, I am pleased to report that there will be **no** new increases in taxes of any kind in Budget 2026. Following the guidance of the Curran Report, the residential mil rate will remain at 7 mils and the business mil rate at 12 mils. There will be no fee increases of any kind. Last year, Council took proactive steps to reduce or eliminate numerous fees related to development and general repair. This year we are removing costs associated with permits for fences and patios and maintaining zero dollar permits for general repairs for residential properties all year round.

Our tax system, defined by the assessment of properties set by the Municipal Assessment Agency, remains intact. 2026 will see four million, five hundred forty-four thousand, one hundred fifty-nine dollars and twenty-five cents (\$4,544,159.25) from this

revenue stream. This is solely based on the assessed value and we encourage residents to carefully review their annual assessment notice and to appeal the assessed value if they believe it warrants reconsideration. Please note that appeals must be submitted directly to the assessment agency, not the Town, so be sure to consult your notice of assessment for the correct contact information.

Revenue is also realized through recreation events like our carnivals and festivals, as well as fire services fees paid by service area contracts outside Holyrood. This budget item, known as Goods & Services, accounts for a contribution of two hundred sixty-three thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$263,750.00).

Government transfers through our municipal operating grant and federal and provincial gas tax, accounts for an additional two hundred eighty-nine thousand, four hundred sixty dollars to our revenue. (\$289,460.00) The remaining one hundred eight dollars (\$108,000.00) comes from the Town's own sources, including occupancy permits, compliance letters and other such documents and services required by outside agencies such as mortgage companies and lawyers, as well as rental fees paid by startup companies. The total revenue balances our total expenditures at five million two hundred five thousand, three hundred sixty-nine dollars and twenty-five cents. (\$5,205,369.25)

The Town of Holyrood is built on openness, fairness and transparency. We will continue to work closely with our residents and offer tax payment options consistent with previous years. Our staff are always available to provide guidance on these options and Residents are encouraged to contact us via email at [info@holyrood.ca](mailto:info@holyrood.ca) or by calling the office during regular business hours.

Mayor, on behalf of your Council, I welcome you to the mayor's chair for this budget — your first budget to approve as Mayor of the Town of Holyrood. Together with our dedicated staff, we, your Council, take pride in the improvements we have made and remain committed to providing safe, reliable services to the people of Holyrood. Our vision is a Town that fosters a safe, fulfilling, and rewarding lifestyle, grounded in respect, tolerance, and inclusion.

Tonight, I present this budget with confidence, confidence in our plan, confidence in our administration, and above all, confidence in our community.