

NEWS RELEASE

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City's Provisional Budget focuses on public safety

Council gives financial plan bylaw third reading; final budget in May

Summary

Public safety emerged as City Council's top priority as they moved the 2023-27 Provisional Budget through three readings on Dec. 19.

Tax increases will pay for more firefighters, more civilian and police staff for Nanaimo RCMP, and full year funding for community safety officers. Council agreed to hire 20 new fire fighters in 2023 and 20 more by 2025 to address their growing workload and meet the needs of a growing region.

For a typical home, the municipal share of their tax bill will increase by 7.3 per cent. The calculation is based on one per cent for the asset management fund and a general increase of 6.3 per cent that includes a 3.6 per cent increase for public safety.

The decision to raise funds for asset management supports the 20-year plan adopted in 2017 to ensure the city has funds to maintain critical infrastructure and meet the demands of a growing community.

The general property tax increase of 6.3 per cent provides for public safety enhancements, day-to-day operations, projects and contributions to reserve funds.

User rates for sewer, water and sanitation are set at a level that covers the cost of providing those services, including maintenance and capital projects. User Fee rates will increase as follows: sanitary sewer four per cent; water five per cent and sanitation fees 2.3 per cent.

In the new year, finance staff verify estimates against confirmed revenues and expenditures to create a final budget that is presented to Council for approval in May. For more information on the City's budget visit www.nanaimo.ca/goto/budget.

Strategic Link: The 2023-27 draft financial plan supports livability by hiring additional staff in public safety roles, including police, fire rescue and community safety officers.

Key Points

- In May, City Council adopted the Downtown Safety Action Plan with 12 Community Safety Officers (CSO). Working 6:30 am to 1:30 am everyday, CSOs prevent conflict and provide a welcoming, secure presence. Two full-time Clean Teams remove debris and garbage downtown. With CSOs at work in the downtown, Bylaw officers and RCMP can focus their efforts on the whole City.
- Nanaimo Fire Rescue answers more service calls per member than compared peer departments. To protect our growing community and support fire fighters, City Council voted to hire 20 new fire fighters this year plus 20 more in 2025, and agreed to purchase the equipment they need to do their work.
- Police service will be bolstered by adding four civilian staff and three sworn members to Nanaimo's RCMP detachment in 2023, and seven sworn and civilian staff to perform administrative duties in the coming three years. Beginning in 2020, the City committed to adding three RCMP members per year to reach a total of 15 new members.
- Budget numbers are based on estimates and will be finalized in the new year when revenues and expenditures are finalized. The projected tax increase is on the municipal share only. The City also collects

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taxes on behalf of other agencies, such as school board, hospital, Vancouver Island Regional Library and the Nanaimo Regional District. These bodies set their own budgets.

Quotes

"Nanaimo is growing, and attracting more investment, more residents and more visitors. We live in a beautiful place that more and more people have discovered is a great place to live. Investing in public safety is a necessary part of serving and supporting our community."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

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