



# News Release

December 22, 2016

## Council Adopts 2017-2019 Budget

(Rocky Mountain House, AB) – Following two and a half days of budget deliberations, Council approved Clearwater County’s 2017 operating and capital budgets in a special meeting held December 19, 2016.

The 2017 budget includes operating revenues of \$45,517,000.00 and operating expenses of \$32,656,852.00, representing a 6.3% decrease in operating expenses from the 2016 budget. Capital expenditures of \$26,940,617.00 in 2017 represent a 14.5% decrease in capital budget from the previous year.

“Council spent a considerable amount of time examining and reflecting upon operating and capital budget considerations, and I feel we made every effort to minimize spending without reducing services,” said Pat Alexander, Reeve, Clearwater County. “We reviewed revenue forecasts and in particular the declining non-residential assessments and how these declining revenues might impact not only 2017, but future years as well.”

Council utilized unrestricted surplus of \$2.87 million from 2015 and \$1.6 million from 2016, to offset anticipated revenue losses in 2017 and 2018 years, while maintaining Council’s reserve transfers according to their capital infrastructure reserve policies.

“We’re fortunate that current and previous Councils have set aside reserve funds as that helps alleviate the burden on the tax base when revenues are down or large scale capital projects move ahead,” Alexander continued. “Council incorporated feedback we received from the Service Level Survey and held the line in terms of service provision, specifically in terms of infrastructure such as roads and bridges.”

In terms of the Phase 1 Operations Building and the Phase 2 Administration Building, Council moved the capital project from the 2017 budget to 2018 for future budget consideration - to allow time for the Joint Development Area (JDA) discussions with the Town of Rocky Mountain House to conclude as well as provide the opportunity for additional public consultation. The JDA and associated servicing agreement and area structure plan are expected to be completed in 2017.

Alexander added, that “although there were operating cost increases associated with the carbon tax and general inflation affecting service delivery, Council deferred some priority projects into future years. The result is a balanced budget today, with decreases in both operating and capital expenses reflective of Council’s mindfulness of the economic times.”

The decrease in operating expenses also represents the completion of the Town of Rocky Mountain House’s arena expansion project, which showed up as an operating expense for the County for the past two years, as the Town is the owner of the capital asset.



## Budget 2017 Highlights

### Key Projects or Programs

#### Public Works

- **Asphalt Overlay Program** including re-surfacing, side slope improvement and other work on Prairie Creek Road from the junction of Highway 752 to Highway 22 (22.3 kms).
- **Gravel Road Rehabilitation Program** rebuilding of approximately 32 kms of local gravel road, including shoulder pull projects.
- **Bridges** including Bingley Road north of Hwy 12; Perry Pit Road and four bridge-sized culverts.
- **Road Maintenance Program** re-graveling of 380 kms of road during the winter gravel program with spot gravelling during the summer program. Maintaining 13 grader beats with approximately 160 kms per beat.
- **Facilities** complete the construction of a new salt/sand storage in Caroline along with the development of Phase 1 of the Caroline Industrial Park, which includes 11 light industrial lots.
- **Special Projects** includes the engineering for rehabilitation of the Beaver Flats Road in 2018.

#### Planning and Development

- **Development and Planning** administration of development, subdivision and rezoning applications.
- **Statutory Plan updates** in 2017, including the completion of a joint development area (JDA) agreement and associated servicing agreements and area structure plan (ASP) for the area north of Rocky Mountain House.
- **Heritage Coordination** for the Clearwater County Heritage Board as well as management of the Brazeau Collieries National Historic Site, Nordegg Heritage Centre Museum and Visitor Information Centre.
- **Nordegg Development** planning for development according to the Nordegg Development Plan and marketing of residential, industrial and cottage lots in the County's hamlet.
- **Safety** administering the County's health and safety program.

#### Agricultural Services and Landcare

- **Landcare** programs will continue to educate and promote environmental stewardship; riparian protection and support for the Sasquatch and Partners program.
- **Roadside Brushing Program** clearing approximately 40 kms of municipal road right-of-ways and intersections to enhance safety, drainage and snow storage capacities.
- **Roadside Mowing Program** including mowing of 950 kms of road shoulder or road right-of-way to provide for enhanced visibility and protection of infrastructure integrity.
- **Reclamation** projects including County-owned gravel pits and borrow pits.
- **Weed Management Program** including education, enforcement and maintenance of community driven weed projects.
- **Farm and acreage services/equipment rental** including well chlorination and weed management support.
- **Recognition programs** for land stewardship/maintenance, farm family award and century farm awards.



### Community and Protective Services

- **Community Services** programs supporting quality of life and healthy lifestyles, including the support of culture (museums, libraries), animal control, cemeteries, recreation, community halls and social services.
- **Community Peace Officer Program** addressing infrastructure protection and education for safety of the travelling public.
- **Emergency Services** including Clearwater Regional Fire & Rescue Services (CRFRS), the regional School Resource Officer (SRO) Program and Clearwater Regional Emergency Response Agency (CREMA).
- **Leslieville/Condor Fire Hall** planning for construction of a combined fire hall.
- **Economic Development** including regional economic development and tourism support.

### Corporate Services

- **Assessment and Taxation** functions including residential, non-residential and farmland assessments.
- **Financial Operations** facilitate financial operations of County and its departments, including accounts receivable, accounts payable, asset administration, budget development and management.
- **Human Resources** provision to County departments including employee attraction and retention planning.
- **Information Technology** delivery of information technology to County departments.
- **Communications** including County's communications and community engagement programs, including website, social media and newsletter.
- **Legislative** supports the County's governance functions. Increase in 2017 due to costs of holding municipal election.

### 2017 Budget Summary

<b>Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$45.5 million</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$32.7 million</b>
Ag Services and Landcare	\$1.7 million
Community and Protective Services	\$9.8 million
Finance and Corporate Services	\$5.1 million
Planning and Development	\$2.1 million
Public Works	\$13.1 million
Reserve used for operations	\$561,000.00
<b>Capital Revenues</b>	<b>\$2.4 million</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>	<b>\$26.9 million</b>
Ag Services and Landcare	\$232,500.00
Community and Protective Services	\$3.7 million
Finance and Corporate Services	\$100,000.00
Planning and Development	\$925,400.00
Public Works	\$21 million
Reserve used for capital	\$9 million
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>\$6,528,481.00</b>
Transfers to reserves	(\$6,528,481.00)



## **Reserve Summary**

*Projected reserves as of December 31, 2016:* \$68.3 million  
*Projected reserves as of December 31, 2017:* \$56.4 million

### Projected Restricted Reserve balances as of December 31, 2017

Tax rate stabilization	\$11.5 million	Bridges	\$1.7 million
Public Works – shop	\$6.7 million	West Country roads	\$1.5 million
Internet	\$5.9 million	County fire	\$942,118.00
Paving	\$5.5 million	North Saskatchewan River Park	\$500,000.00
Wastewater	\$5.3 million	Recreation facilities	\$407,565.00
Gravel reclamation	\$4.6 million	Work in progress	\$361,000.00
County facilities	\$4.3 million	Rocky airport	\$64,500.00
Gravel	\$4.4 million	Regional fire	\$51,223.00
Ag Rec Facility	\$3.7 million	Leslieville Wastewater	\$43,195.00
Resource roads	\$3.0 million	Nordegg Development	-\$6.2 million
Disaster recovery	\$2.0 million		

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For more information on County financial statements or projects underway, please visit our website at [www.clearwatercounty.ca](http://www.clearwatercounty.ca) or contact the Clearwater County office at 403-845-4444.