

For Immediate Release

News Release

2023 Draft Operating Budget

Edson, Alberta, October 19th, 2022 –Council was introduced to the draft 2023 Operating Budget on October 15th.

During the budget consultation earlier in the year, residents identified a desire for a service level increase for roads while maintaining service levels in most other departments. The \$30.5 million draft budget responds to these priorities by increasing the budget for transportation through increased infrastructure funding and snow removal. The budget also includes funds for casual staff to assist with outdoor rinks, a sidewalk maintenance program, and a proposed backflow prevention program.

The draft budget also includes the completion of the final phase of the Covid Recovery Strategy (\$295,000), which was implemented to reduce taxation impacts through the pandemic, including a tax reduction of 5% in 2020.

The Town of Edson faces numerous challenges with this budget due to increased inflationary pressures, rising gas and electricity prices, and a substantial mandatory increase in the policing contract. To lessen the taxation impact, additional funds from the Revenue Sharing Agreement with Yellowhead County have been allocated towards the operating budget. Efforts have also been made to reduce spending and increase revenues where possible.

The base budget accounts for 4.52% of the proposed increase, which is comprised of mandatory items such as policing, inflationary costs, compensation, and other obligations including 2.46% for COVID recovery. The additional 3.19% is made up of improved service level changes which were reviewed during the introductory budget meeting with Council.

Council requested further information to provide costing for the hiring of additional summer students to support the road program, dust control on the Willmore Park access road, and the reinstatement of the skating oval at Water Tower Park on an annual basis. The operational effects and costs for these items will be brought back to Council for further consideration.

When all of this is taken into consideration, the draft budget proposes an approximate taxation increase of 7.71%. Each percent represents approximately \$120,000 in revenue.

The draft budget will be adjusted in the coming weeks before being brought back to Council for deliberation.

The Town of Edson is committed to providing a high level of service to meet the growing demands of our community, all while being fiscally responsible and ensuring long-term sustainability.

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