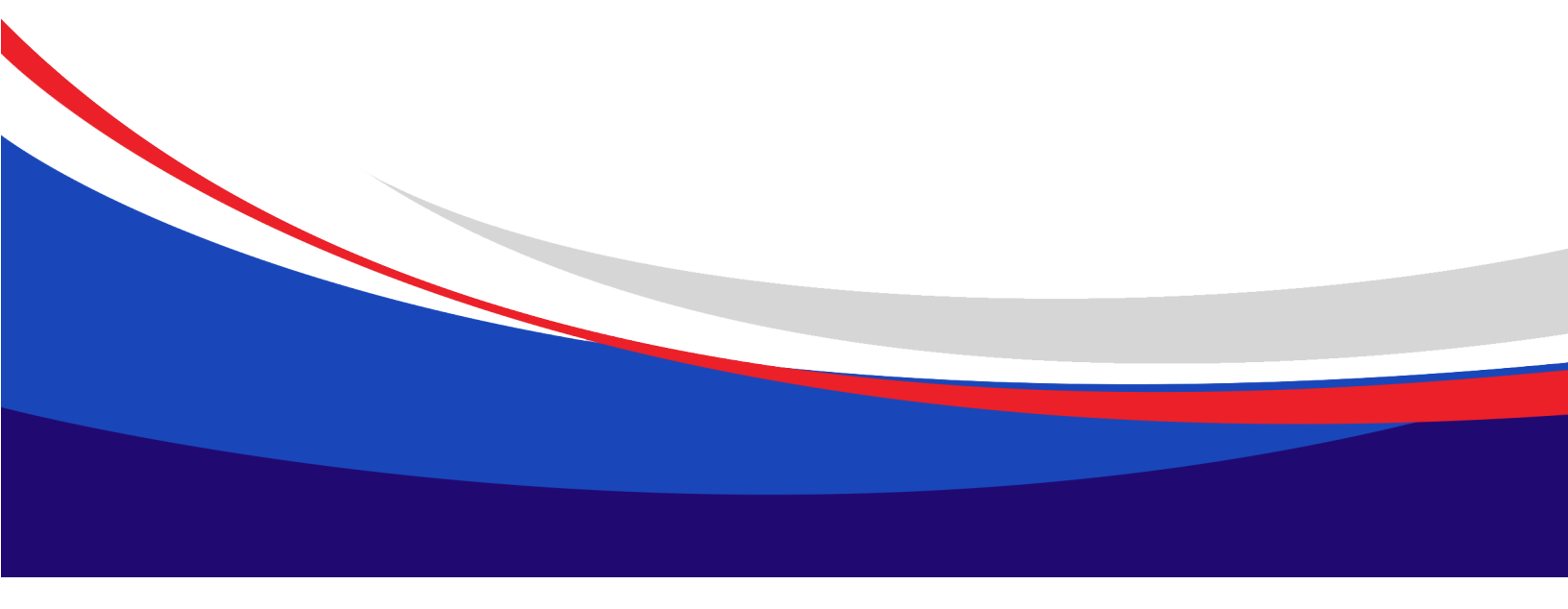




2021 Budget

Frequently Asked Questions





Q. Has the 2021 municipal budget been approved?

A. No, a proposed budget, along with supporting information has been provided to the public on the Township website and Council is looking for feedback to consider before the budget is approved. The feedback will be reviewed and discussed at the March 8 meeting of Council.

Q. Is the cost of COVID 19 contributing to the proposed tax increase?

A. The proposed tax increase is not related to COVID 19. The potential additional costs and lost revenues as a result of the pandemic are proposed to be paid for by reserves, government grants or through finding savings.

The Township received about \$500K in 2020 in COVID relief from senior levels of government to assist with COVID related costs and lost revenue. The Township will continue to look for opportunities such as this in 2021.

Q. What do my taxes pay for?

A. Slightly over half of the total taxes paid go towards local services provided by the Township including the OPP, fire, conservation area, roads maintenance, recycling, planning and building, recreation, parks, and capital projects. The remainder of the tax bill goes to the County for the services they provide, with the rest going to the Province to fund the school boards.

Q. Is the cost of water and sewer a factor in the proposed tax increase?

A. Utilities costs are funded separately by water and sewer users, and do not impact the tax rate.

Q. Shouldn't the reduction in recreation services due to the pandemic mean lower taxes?

A. The budget has been set at normal recreation levels, with the assumption that any shortfalls in revenue will be funded by government grants or reduced costs. Though some costs will be saved due to the current reduced recreation services, the related fee revenue will also be reduced, resulting in no significant change to the overall tax requirement.

Q. How much are staff salary rates going up?

A. The staff increases are as per the collective agreement for union staff is 2%. Based on the CPI Core Inflation Measure provided by the Bank of Canada, non-union staff increases are 1.9%. The cost of the staff benefits plan is projected to increase 8%.

Council's remuneration uses the same CPI index as non-union staff, therefore also increasing 1.9%.

Q. Why are overall salary and benefits going up 11%?

A. Approximately half of this figure relates to the increase in salary and benefits for existing staff and for the phasing in of positions previously approved by council. The new proposed positions in 2021 reflect service enhancements and service improvements, which were recommended to Council by a third-party consultant to provide for efficiencies and better service levels. The rationale for these is provided in the budget binder posted on the website. A summary of these changes is found on page 13 of the budget binder.

Q. Wouldn't all of the extra taxes from the new developments pay for increased budget demands?

A. Approximately \$330,000 is expected in 2021 related to new growth, and this is being used to fund some of the proposed increase in costs.

Q. What service improvements could residents expect for the proposed increase in taxes?

A. The budget includes plans to address improvements in a number of service areas. The overall service enhancements are identified in the Council Strategic Plan. Plans related to 2021 are highlighted in the budget binder documentation provided on the township website in each department.

Q. Is part of the tax increase related to the Ferry service, specifically not charging a fee during the pandemic?

A. The municipal tax levy does not fund in any part the Ferry service to Amherst Island. The majority of the cost of operations for the Ferry is subsidized by the Provincial Government. The remaining costs of operations are covered by the fares charged for the Ferry. The lost revenue from fares not being collected to this point during the pandemic are being covered through a combination of reserve funds and provincial grants received, not the tax levy.