

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2022

Town Council passes 2023 Budget during Regular Meeting of Council

Town Council passed the 2023 Capital and Operating Budgets during the December 7, 2022, Regular Meeting of Council. As part of the 2023 Budget, funding has been allocated towards the maintenance, upgrades and replacement of Town assets, equipment and infrastructure as well as projects that enhance economic opportunities, safety and quality of life in Drayton Valley.

In 2022, Town Council developed and adopted a Corporate Business Plan that provides long-term focus and direction for municipal services, initiatives and programs that support Town Council's strategic goals for the community. Further, strategic planning sessions were held to identify clear objectives and key areas of investment. This document and subsequent discussions were used to guide budget deliberations and ensured that the budget aligned with the strategic priorities of Council and the best interests of the community.

Recognizing the vital role that protective and fire services play in the safety and wellbeing of the community and its residents, Town Council has approved funding to provide for resources that support operational functions within the protective services department. An additional level one Community Peace Officer will be hired to ensure adequate enforcement coverage in Drayton Valley. Security cameras will be installed in community spaces and Town owned facilities to increase safety in the community and will serve to deter crime and support the efforts of local law enforcement. Funding has also been allocated towards protective and communication equipment and the addition of a pumper truck at the Drayton Valley Fire Station to ensure the department is equipped to respond to emergencies in the region.

Investing in the community through increased beautification efforts and upgrades and improvements to recreation facilities and amenities will attract newcomers and visitors and enhance the overall community experience for Drayton Valley residents. Within the 2023 budget, residents will see the installation of festive outdoor lighting, replacement of the scoreboard at the Omni 1 arena, flashing lights at four crosswalks, upgrading of two kilometers of sidewalks and walking trails, the expansion of the disc golf course at Ivan To Park and the installation of welcoming and way-finder signage. In an effort to reduce the spread of invasive weeds, such as dandelions, a weed spraying program was incorporated into the 2023 budget to improve the appearance of parks and greenspaces in Drayton Valley.

Supporting initiatives that foster growth and increase economic diversity and resiliency continue to be at the forefront of Town Council's strategic goals. Several important objectives and projects were identified through the development of a strategic economic development plan that will advance growth and focus on long-term sustainable prosperity. Continued efforts will be made to provide resources and support for existing businesses and to enhance workforce needs for local industries and emerging sectors through the expansion of educational programming. Attracting new investment and encouraging growth through the development of Town owned lands will improve community diversity and achieve a positive impact on employment and community growth. The Town will also make improvements to the airport and prepare a downtown revitalization plan to increase Drayton Valley's investment opportunities.

The budget also provides for necessary infrastructure maintenance and upgrades to ensure operational continuity and long-term efficiency. Projects scheduled for 2023 include the rehabilitation of landfill cell three, main valve replacements, improvements to 50 Avenue (east), and improvements to the wastewater treatment plant. Anticipating the future budgetary requirements for asset life cycle management and growth in the community, Town resources have been directed towards the implementation of

an asset management program that will track Town assets as they move through regular maintenance, repair and replacement phases.

“We are continuing to invest in our community, our economy and in our residents; our budget ensures that we continue to deliver quality services that our residents expect and rely on.” said Mayor Nancy Dodds. *“We have tailored our 2023 budget to respond to the needs of the community while planning for Drayton Valley’s economic recovery and future growth. We have identified and selected projects and areas of investment that will have a positive impact on the community while exercising fiscal responsibility to minimize the financial impacts of inflation. As we look to the new year, there is much to celebrate; 30 business licenses were issued to new businesses in 2022 signalling confidence in the local economy and that the community is getting back to work. We have seen the return of annual and new community events that included street parties and a round dance; I was so proud of our community’s ability to pull together to make these events possible. Perhaps the most exciting initiative is the anticipated completion of the Ricochet Oil Corp. Aquatic Centre that is entering the final stages of construction that will be followed by staff training in preparation of welcoming the public into the building. The year ahead looks promising, and I look forward to the continued growth and excitement that is building in our community.”*

Drayton Valley, along with many municipalities across Alberta and Canada, is facing increasing expenditures due to inflation. Rising costs to fuel, utilities, insurance, parts, equipment and labour are affecting most aspects of daily operations and costs of capital projects; increases in these areas is having an overall impact to the Town’s Budget. With this in mind, Town Council has made significant efforts to deliver a budget that reflects lower expenditures for 2023 than in 2022 without impacting service levels. Additionally, prudent fiscal management decisions throughout the budget process allowed for the appropriate contribution of funds into reserves for future capital projects, infrastructure repairs and replacements and ensures that the Town is in a healthy financial position.

Over the last 5 years, as the Town looked to support its residents and businesses through ongoing economic challenges, as well as the pandemic, tax rates decreased by 12% while inflation rates in Canada rose as much as 8%. The Town is also facing further financial pressures beyond its control from the federal government following a decision to increase RCMP wages 23.7 over the next six years. All Alberta municipalities, including Drayton Valley, will be required to cover these costs that includes retroactive pay going back five years. While this has created unforeseen financial challenges, Town Council is supportive of the local RCMP membership and has made allowances for these additional costs.

The 2023 Budget balances Town Council’s prioritized strategic plan for operational and capital expenditures with the realities and impacts of inflation. In order to undertake and complete the work as outlined in the budget, taxes will be increasing by 5.5%. This will ensure the continued sustainable operation of services and allow the Town to increase and expand its services in the community. The final impact to residential and commercial taxation will be realized in the spring of 2023 following the receipt and review of property assessments.

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