



COMMUNITY

MURRAY HARBOUR & AREA NEWSLETTER

Municipal Tax Rate Increase to Offset Expected Deficits

The Rural Municipality of Murray Harbour is facing significant financial hurdles in the coming years. At present, village operation expenditures are expected to exceed income by \$12K at the 2019/20 year-end and \$21K in 2020/21. To help offset a portion of this, Council has approved a 5¢ increase to municipal property tax rates in 2020.

Forecasted overages are primarily related to two issues:

1. Repayment of Loan Principal for the Cape Bear Road Sewage Extension

The village took out a loan to cover its 20% portion (\$150K) of this 2018 infrastructure project. Originally, it was expected that the Sewage Utility would pay for the associated costs. However, it was later discovered through the 2018 audit that the village had already borrowed \$138K from the Utility, through various transactions, in the three preceding years. In September 2019, the Utility paid the village around \$14K to fulfill its remaining commitment to the project

costs and to balance the Village-Utility intercompany account. With that payment, the village became responsible for the entirety of the loan.

In December of 2019, it was very clear that the village could not afford these payments. After discussions between the Utility, village, and auditor, it was agreed that the Utility would pay for the interest costs associated with the loan; this could be done without affecting the intercompany account. This leaves the village responsible for the loan principal payments of \$12K/year until 2034.

2. Repayment of Misallocated Gas Tax Funds

In 2017, approx. \$30K was taken from the village's gas tax account and put into a GIC. In 2018, when the GIC matured, that money was redeemed and placed into the village's general operating account instead of being returned to the gas tax account. In 2019, the PEI Infrastructure Secretariat, which oversees the Gas Tax Fund program, discovered the discrepancy of \$31K in the gas tax account and advised the village that the money would have to be repaid with

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interest. As a result, the village will be required to repay \$6,500/year for the next five years.

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In 2019, Council and a dedicated group of volunteers made tremendous effort to try and offset some of these expenses through various fundraising activities and by minimizing expenditures where possible. However, in the long-term, Council must look at more stable solutions.

After thorough review of the financial situation, the Finance & Infrastructure Committee recommended a 5¢ increase to municipal property tax rates for 2020. This will increase the non-commercial property rate from 49¢ to 54¢ and the commercial property rate from 52¢ to 57¢. This was approved at the March 11 meeting of Council. It will generate an estimated

\$9300 in new tax revenue. This will cover approximately 44% of the expected cash deficit for 2020; the remainder will be addressed through various fundraising initiatives. It's important to note that prior to 2019, there had been no tax increases for several years.

No one likes the idea of increasing tax rates, but it is ultimately unavoidable. Even without the loan and gas tax repayments, the village must still contend with year-over-year inflation on operational costs such as insurance (a 9.7% increase in 2020), maintaining village properties, and operation of important facilities like the Community Centre.

A special meeting of Council to approve the 2020/21 budget will be held meeting on **March 19 at 7 pm**. All are welcome to attend. ☐

What Does the Municipal Tax Rate Increase Mean to You?

For homeowners within the municipal boundaries of Murray Harbour, this increase will result in moderate increases to the municipal portion of your 2020 property tax. For example, if your property has a Taxable Value Assessment of:

\$75,000: Your municipal property tax will increase by \$37.50 (\$12.50/installment)

\$100,000: Your municipal property tax will increase by \$50 (\$16.67/installment)

\$125,000: Your municipal property tax will increase by \$62.50 (\$20.83/installment)

To calculate your own 2020 municipal property tax:

Taxable Value Assessment/100 x 0.54 (non-commercial properties)

Taxable Value Assessment/100 x 0.57 (commercial properties)

Message from the Mayor

Mayor Paul White

The question is: has winter delivered its final blow? I am sure we will get the odd snowstorm or dusting of flurries. Now I am not a meteorologist but one has a feeling within that Spring is soon around the corner.

Winter brings snowstorms, cold temperatures; it means shovelling, turning up the thermostat, and too many, feeling the winter blahs or "blues" where you just want to curl up and hibernate until spring. For others it is more the winter blues that zap their energy and leave them feeling empty. They have no desire to leave the house or even do things they normally enjoy. This, in medical terms is called "depression".

Years ago, myself and most people, were not informed, or were misinformed, about depression. It was kept hush-hush and hidden. Today, depression is more openly discussed but stigma still remains and people are reluctant to say they have depression. There is no reason to be ashamed as it is just another illness but it isn't visible as are other illnesses.

Depression is something beyond your control. It is a chemical imbalance in your brain. Some deal with depression just during the winter months. Once the sun starts shining and the days get warmer they

begin to feel like their old selves, but others battle it year round.

Depression is not something to be ashamed of. I have suffered from depression myself since 2000. After I was diagnosed by my family doctor I started seeing a great psychiatrist in Charlottetown. I see him every month or weekly if the need be. As I opened up to others I began to learn that I am not alone, many friends shared their own personal struggles.

If you yourself think you may have depression, seek help. Whether professionally, through a friend or relative. Help is out there.

Note: Statistics say that 1 in 5 Canadians suffer from depression and the other 4 Canadians have friend or know of someone who has suffered from it. □

Have Treasures to Donate?

Keep the village in mind during your spring cleaning!

The Village Council is planning to participate in the 70 Mile Yard Sale and will gladly accept your unwanted treasures (or gently used junk). All proceeds will go to the Murray Harbour Village general operating fund.

There is storage available in the Community Centre basement if this would be more convenient for you. Please call the Village Office or one of our Councillors for more info.



Council News

Beautification & Special Events

Margaret Vanlderstine, Chair

The B&S Committee met recently to discuss any concerns or suggestions from the events held in 2019 as well as to brainstorm for this upcoming year's calendar of events.

We plan to continue with the tradition of our Canada Day Celebration as well as some newer traditions, such as our End of Summer BBQ & Corn boil, our Fall Take-out fundraiser, and additionally several new and fun ideas.

We look forward to seeing more residents out participating and supporting these events and we thank you in advance. The proceeds from these fundraisers are intended to aid in the running of our municipality as it is very costly to operate a community effectively.

We also like to use the funds to make our village more eye pleasing (flowers, nicely maintained grounds and parks, etc) for our residents, as well as our tourists - who we hope to see return.

2020 Flower Baskets

If you are interested in purchasing a flower basket (either as a gift to the village or in memory of a loved one), please contact the Village Office. We purchase our flowers

locally from Island Pride. Though this year's price has not been confirmed, it is expected to be similar to last year (\$26 per basket).

Last year, baskets were purchased in memory of Lucy MacNeill, Phyllis Harris, Terry Pickens, Margie & Edison Horton, William MacKenzie, Percy & Jemima Richards, White family members, Edgar family members. A basket was also purchased in special thanks to Howard Moore. We sincerely apologize if any names have been missed.

Small Halls Festival 2020

Our Small Halls event has been finalized and is going to be held on **Tuesday, June 16**, and the line up this year is going to be very pleasing! Stay tuned for more information. As always we appreciate donations of sandwiches and sweets to be shared during the intermission. With the hopes of a full house, we need to have a good amount of refreshments to offer—guests always remember good hosts and good food experiences, and we do want them to come back and visit us again!

Toonie 50/50

This spring, we are planning a new Toonie 50/50 draw (official name has not yet been decided) to support village operations. Similar to the Rotary's Gold Mine Draw, boxes will be placed in four local retail locations with a draw every Saturday. We hope to have plans finalized by April.

Volunteers Welcomed

Spring is just around the corner, sunny, warmer days are coming! Village

Councillors, with all their volunteers, will liven up your summer. Anyone wishing to help with events, do not hesitate to let a council member know. We would be only too happy to have you on board, whenever or wherever you can.

Thank you for your continued support. ☐

Annual Report Available

2019 was a busy year! View the Beautification & Special Events 2019 Annual Report at www.murrayharbour.ca (under News).

Sports & Recreation

Carol White, Chair

Cenotaph Upgrades

The village has received approval for \$572 in funding from Veterans Affairs Canada to cover half the costs of a project to relocate the names of three veterans that are currently placed on the back of the cenotaph to the front. The remainder of the project will be paid for from the village's Soldiers Monument Fund.

Residents are also encouraged to forward the names of veterans who are not currently listed on the cenotaph asap.

Upcoming Activities

Pickle-ball will resume in the spring. Corn Hole, another outdoor activity for summer fun, is being planned. ☐

New Library Book Drop

Have a hard time getting your books returned during library hours? Problem solved! A new outdoor book drop will soon be placed near the back entrance to the Community Centre. The book drop was built by the talented folks at Inclusions East with funds provided through the provincial library service. ☐

New Short Film on Climate Change and Coastal Communities

Coastal Communities... At the Ready is a new film that explores how coastal communities are preparing for, and responding to, a range of climate change impacts and other hazards hitting the coast. That includes everything from hurricanes and other extreme weather, to floods and erosion, to tsunamis and oil spills.

This 13-minute film will be of interest to all those concerned about living on the coast, making a living at sea, and dealing with climate change. The film, which is also suitable for school and university classrooms, provides a better understanding of the issues and challenges coastal communities face, and how they can overcome these challenges.

The direct link for the film is:
www.communityconservation.net/coastal-communities-at-the-ready ☐



Church Notices

Annual Inter-Denominational Father/Son/Daughter Breakfast

Saturday, March 21 at 8:30 am at the Murray Harbour Church of Christ. Full course breakfast, live local gospel music, and a guest speaker with an interesting story. No Charge. All are welcome.

Murray Harbour Baptist Church

Sunday School: 9:45 am

Sunday Worship: 11 am

Kidz Klub: Wednesdays, 6:15 - 7:15pm

Easter Cantata: April 12 at 11am

Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church

Pastor Aaron Tardif, 902-962-2200

Sunday Worship: 10am

Sunday School: 10:30am

Bible Study: Wednesdays at 7pm

Alpha 'Community Connection': Sunday evenings at 6:30 until the end of April. Lunch & video to follow.

Easter Breakfast: Easter morning at 8am in the church basement.

Murray Harbour Church of Christ

Minister Victor McCullough, 902-962-2714

Sunday Worship: 11am and 7pm

Annual Spring Meetings: April 5 - 8.

Speakers are Gordon Weatherby (on Sunday at 11am and weekday evenings at 7pm) and Tom Marshall of Maritime Christian College (on Monday to Wednesday mornings, 9:30 to noon).

Morning coffee and snacks, lunch each day, and evening snacks will be provided.

Vacation Bible School: July 13-17

Murray River Church of Christ

Pastor Charlie MacNeill, 902-962-3278

Sunday School: 10am

Sunday Worship: 11am

Memorial United Church

Reverend Debbie Aiken

Sunday Worship: 10:30am

The Stiff Family Gospel Concert: March 15 at 2pm. Admission is \$10; children under 12 are free.

Good Friday Service: April 10 at 7pm

Easter Sunday Service: April 12 at 10:30am. Communion served.

Lennon House Fundraising Concert: April 19 at 2pm. Free will offering.

Joyful Sound Concert: June 6 - more information to follow

Meet Your First Responders

Come out on **Wednesday, March 25 at 6pm** at **Memorial United Church** to meet the members of the Murray River and Murray Harbour Fire Departments.

The departments will have their trucks and equipment on site and members will answer questions about their training.

Coffee, tea, and light snacks will be served.

Murray River Baptist Church

Sunday Worship: 10am

Sunday School: 10:45am

Bible Study: Wednesdays at 7pm

WellSpring Presbyterian Church

Minister: Rev. Dr. David Son: 902-969-1983

Worship Service & Sunday School: 10:30am

Week of Prayer Service: March 13 at 7pm.
Pastor Aaron Tardif speaking, followed by potluck luncheon (finger food). Please bring something to share.

Ladies Fellowship Night: Monday nights in March, 7 - 9 pm. Come and meet some new friends.

Lenten Services:

Palm Sunday - April 5: 10:30am

Maundy Thursday - April 9 at 7pm

Easter Sunday - April 12 at 10:30am

Sunrise Service - April 12 at 6am-ish at Graham's Pond. Breakfast to follow.

Fund Raising Events:

Chili/Chowder Supper: March 28 from 4 - 6:30pm. Includes rolls, biscuits, dessert, tea & coffee. Eat in or take out. \$12 for adults and \$8 for children under 12. Tickets available at the door.

Lobster/Ham Take Out: June 27. Price to be determined. Limited amount. Must be pre-ordered.



At the Library

For the Kids

Children's Story-time

Saturdays at 10:30 am. Stories and activities for children 3-5 years.

Egg Carton Flowers

Tuesday, March 17 at 11:30am. Come make some beautiful spring bouquets at the library! All supplies provided.

Washi Tape Bookmarks

Friday, March 20 at 11am. Unleash your creativity and decorate to your heart's delight! All supplies provided.

For the Adults

Watercolour Bookmarks

Tuesday, March 24 at 1pm. Deceptively easy starry sky bookmarks—make 1 or a few! A great gift idea too. All supplies provided.

Contact Sarah MacNeill, librarian for Murray Harbour (962-3875) and Murray River (962-2667), for more info!



This & That

Farmers Market Indoor Yard Sale

On **Saturday, March 28** (9am – noon) the Murray Harbour Farmers Market and Friends are hosting an indoor yard sale at the Murray Harbour Community Centre.



There will be in excess of 15 sellers with everything your heart could possibly desire! We are hoping to raise some funds for projects at our own Southern Kings Consolidated so a donation jar will be set up where shoppers can drop in a loonie to help with the cause!

Friendly Circle Club

The Friendly Circle Club meets usually meets every first Thursday of the month. However, please note that the **April 2 meeting has been cancelled**. Details about the May meeting will be provided as they become available.

Community Centre Stretch & Curl on Wednesdays, Thursdays for \$2

Stretch Class - 9:30 to 10:30am
Floor Curling - 10:30am to Noon

Murray Harbour Community Council

Paul L. White

Mayor

W. Glen White

Deputy Mayor and Chair of Finance & Infrastructure

Sandra Gordon

Chair of Sewage Utility

Paula MacLean

Chair of Planning

Marlene MacNeill

Chair of Emergency Measures Organization

Margaret Vanderstine

Chair of Beautification and Special Events

Carol White

Chair of Sports, Recreation, and Community Centre

Christine Jackson

Chief Administrative Officer

Contact Us

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