

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
March 28, 2024
Approved Minutes

DATE: March 28, 2024
TIME: 12:00 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.
PLACE: Council Chambers

ATTENDANCE: Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant; Councillors Jill Chandler; Ron Dowling; Jody Jackson; Jeff MacDonald; Jeremy Crosby, CAO; Dale McKeigan, Acting Director of Planning, Development, and Heritage; Kim O’Connell; Director of Finance and Technology; Jeannie Gallant, Director of Infrastructure; Wendy Watts, Community and Business Engagement Manager; and Mary McAskill, Recording Clerk

REGRETS: Councillors Gordie Cox and Jeff MacDonald

CHAIR: Mayor Steve Ogden

1. Call to Order

Mayor Steve Ogden called the Regular Monthly Council Meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance and those viewing via social media.

Mayor Ogden took a moment to acknowledge the land upon which we gather is the unceded territory of the Mi’Kmaq people, and we pay our respects to the Indigenous Mi’Kmaq people of this territory past, present, and future.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Nil

3. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Councillor Jill Chandler and seconded by Councillor Ron Dowling that the agenda be approved as circulated.

Mayor Ogden introduced the Chair of the Finance and Technology Committee – Councillor Ron Dowling.

Councillor Dowling – on behalf of the Stratford Town Council, it is my pleasure to bring forward some highlights from the 2024/25 Town of Stratford Budget. Preparing the budget has once again been a challenge as it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the level of service and growth required for our community within the current means available to us. PEI municipalities, including ours, have been without a revenue sharing agreement with the Province of PEI since March of 2022. Though negotiations continue and we remain hopeful

– municipalities are also not able to project a deficit when preparing our annual operating budgets. As the result of the current needs, and in preparing for future needs and investments in our community, Council is unified in its preparedness to make the difficult decisions necessary to meet these current and future needs of our community. With this realization, it has been agreed to a planned residential two cent municipal tax increase for each of the next three years starting from 2024/25 budget. This increase will assist the Town of Stratford in delivering the various projects and making investments that are needed for the Town's continued growth and development.

We recognize that residents are experiencing increases elsewhere in today's economic climate, and we too have inflationary pressures on our budgets. Through feedback in the draft budget survey, it was positive to note that while a mix of views on the tax increase were expressed, a majority of respondents did favour the direction of the budget and the proposed areas of expenditures and investments.

We have a lot to celebrate in Stratford. As a community that is growing – one which recognizes and celebrates our increasing diversity and culture, alongside an appreciation of our history, where residents appreciate our natural environment and enjoy the ever growing active transportation connections, and where residents are willing to engage with us and participate in various opportunities to provide feedback, thoughts, and ideas. We should all be proud and hopeful of the future. We continue to listen and look out for the best interests of both our current and future residents. We are truly building the best community possible!

Revenue and Expenses

The 2024/25 Town of Stratford budget forecasts an operating surplus of just \$500 for the upcoming year once depreciation and the principal payments on long term debt are accounted for. Like all Island municipalities, the Town of Stratford is limited in the sources of revenue available and relies primarily on property taxes, utility charges, and fees to pay for our services and infrastructure. Our ability to maintain, and particularly to expand or offer additional services, programming, and infrastructure is limited. As we continue to negotiate with the Province of PEI, alongside our fellow municipalities, for a stronger, more predictable and stable funding agreement, your Council recognizes that as a growing community, our needs continue to change and grow. In order to meet the needs today, as well as into the future, a two cent residential property tax increase is proposed over the next three years with a commitment that any surplus will be placed in a reserve for future Town of Stratford growth investments. As with the previous Council, the current Council remains committed to being fiscally responsible with your tax dollars while also balancing the needs of our community both now and looking forward to the future.

Our 2024/25 budget includes continued investment in our community through priorities important to you – active transportation, policing and fire, technology, parks and recreation, tree planting and forest management planning, climate change mitigation, and more. We will continue to make decisions which are in the overall Town's greater interest and invest in projects and infrastructure which will better the overall community life for our residents. We look forward to working alongside all of you to complete these projects, and as we do, reflect back to 2002, when the Council of the day made the tough decision to construct our Stratford Town Centre building. Despite strong opposition at the time – this building has proven to be a good investment and operates at capacity on many days throughout the year. In fact, this building could be expanded and used more, which speaks to the foresight of the previous Council. This also serves as a reminder to the current Council that consideration of investments in Stratford must be made with not only the needs of the present in mind, but also of the future.

Capital Budgets

Town

The Town's capital budget for 2024/25 is \$20,622,150 which after infrastructure funding and other funding partners in the amount of \$12, 242,826, will have a net cost of \$8,379,324. Funding for Town capital includes \$11,290,326 in Investing in Canada funding and \$952,500 in other funding.

Utility

The Utility capital budget is \$8,938,200 of which the Town will receive infrastructure funding of \$1,469,894 from Municipal Strategic Component Funding and \$2,200,638 from the Investing in Canada Fund for a net capital of \$4,867,668.

Community Campus

The past year was the first of many exciting ones to come for our community on this project. The tender for site servicing was issued with the first phase of work well underway on this multi-phase, multi-year project. Later in 2024, the road is anticipated to be made public, expanded business park lots are expected to be sold and potentially developed, and the construction of the high school by the Province of PEI will continue. Along with this, a solar project which will assist with the future community and wellness centre being constructed to net zero. The full buildout of the community campus project will require support from all levels of government and the community. Council and staff are working hard to ensure that all the necessary partnerships are in place and ready to help Stratford realize this community changing initiative.

The Town continues to have many positive conversations with a variety of organizations expressing interest in becoming partners with the Town of Stratford at this site. We will

continue to work with these groups, where possible, for the development of recreational and cultural infrastructure on the community campus plans.

Pondside Watershed Restoration

The Pondside watershed restoration project continued this past year, and in 2024 will see dredging at Kelly's Pond and the replacement of a culvert crossing Keppoch Road completed in tandem by the Province of PEI. Town staff, Council, and residents are excited to see this project moving closer to completion.

Michael Thomas Waterfront Park

The first phase of the new park on our waterfront began in 2023 with the installation of a boardwalk and lookouts to allow residents and visitors better access to this space. This work is anticipated to be completed in late spring and we hope to welcome the community to the space by summer of 2024. With the connection to Charlottetown from the boardwalk across the active transportation lane on the Hillsborough Bridge, and with the plans on the Charlottetown side for a new park, this will bring opportunity for further development of the commercial lands around the waterfront park, as well as for additional phases of development in the park in accordance with our master plan.

Shape Stratford and Housing Accelerator Funding

While one exciting project wraps up officially, another is just getting underway and both are helping to see the Town of Stratford continue to have important conversations and lead change in our community. Shape Stratford is an 18 month funded project through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Supply Challenge with a goal of finding solutions around barriers to new housing supply through conversations and education. By working together and having conversations in our community, we work towards identifying and closing gaps to achieve suitable housing for all. This project has led to the newly announced Housing Accelerator Funding the Town was recently awarded (also a CMHC project). This funding will support projects and initiatives which lead to more housing units in the Town of Stratford, including an official plan and bylaw review. Shape Stratford has identified that there is a systemic challenge built into the existing process in building public and Council support for projects that increase density due to the values associated with traditional patterns of low-density development, but Housing Accelerator Funding recognizes that changes are needed and can be planned for, leading to both successful projects and community growth.

Other Highlights

- Expansion of the transit system
- Additional RCMP officer
- Opening of a new mini ballfield at Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park

- Solar panel installation at the Stratford Emergency Services Centre and the Town maintenance buildings (subject to funding)
- Implementation of additional supports identified in the first annual business survey and other consultations
- Hiring of a human resource position and implementation of other recommendations from the organizational review
- Increase to the Stratford Youth Centre operational budget
- New Town website
- Expansion of the paved parking lot at Fullerton's Creek Conservation Park (subject to funding)

Stratford Utility Update

The Stratford Utility operates on a cash recovery basis and as such, the Town continually analyzes expenses to ensure that the rates for customers are equitable among our customers, while being sufficient to meet our long term needs. With rising inflationary expense increases over the past year, a modest increase to the water and sewer rates is required amounting to a 5% increase to base and consumption rates effective April 1, 2024. This increase will mean an average increase of just under \$40 over the coming year, or approximately \$10 per quarterly billing cycle. Stratford Utility customers continue to demonstrate their support by limiting their personal use of water where possible and supporting conservation methods and programs. The upcoming year will see projects by the Stratford Utility including:

- Completion of the additional water reservoir tower
- Completion of upgrades to Bunbury and Corish sewer lift stations
- Investigative video surveying of sections of the Town's sewer system
- Installation of standby generators at a few of the larger sewer lift stations
- Addition of fire hydrants in the core area
- Continued implementation of the inflow and infiltration program

Residents who have not had a water audit completed are encouraged to contact the Town to learn how you might save even more water through this process. Visit our website to learn more. Other water saving initiatives in place currently are a low flow showerhead exchange program and a low flow toilet rebate program.

Closing

In closing, on behalf of all members of Council, I first would like to thank our Town staff for their ongoing efforts. I can assure you they are working hard for you every day and are mindful of the budgets set forth and any expenses incurred. I would also like to thank my fellow Council members for their respectful and thoughtful input into the budget, and shared vision and passion for our community.

I would also like to thank our great residents of Stratford. We appreciate hearing from you, whether through the draft budget process as we we've just come through, or at other opportunities where you come out and get involved. You are passionate and dedicated, you give of your time, and you put your trust in us to make the best decisions on your behalf. You help make our community better every day.

As we continue to be a growing community our needs also continue to change and grow. This budget considers the needs we have today while also looking ahead to the future. Like you, we are excited about the future opportunities ahead for our community – both those you can easily see such as the community campus development, new high school, or expanding commercial businesses, and those which you cannot see as easily such as additional RCMP and fire coverage, or investments in our sewer and water infrastructure.

We will continue to work hard for our community, to make the investments needed, to save and cut when and where we can, and to remain open and transparent in our decisions.

Mayor Ogden took a moment to thank all staff, and councillors who worked hard on the budget.

Councillor Jackson also thanked staff, the chair of the Finance and Technology Committee Kim O'Connell, and chair of the Finance and Technology Committee Councillor Ron Dowling for taking on this challenging situation. He also noted that it is great to see that we have a shared commitment to maintain essential services, to invest in critical infrastructure, and to address our community needs.

Active Transportation - Councillor Jackson stated that we all see where we have moved away from the old sidewalk idea and went with the multi-use paths that connect the Town. He added that as chair of the Safety Services Committee, it is great to see the commitment from Council and from staff for the addition of another RCMP member which will further enhance the overall safety of the community. Another big thing will be enhancing our staff resources. The Town is growing and we can't be blind to the fact that we need more staff. Councillor Jackson felt that this is a good signal for our provincial and federal counterparts that we are serious and we are doing our part. They have already shown their commitment to us with the high school and the suggestion of a junior high school so they share our vision and we just need to see them come through with a financial plan for us. Councillor Jackson noted that it is not fun to raise taxes but in conversations with residents they appreciate that we have a vision and that we are united in that vision. This Council and the two previous Councils have talked about the idea of a community campus and the continued growth of the Town and we are sticking to it. Councillor Jackson said he looks forward to seeing where this budget positions us for the future.

Mayor Ogden took to a moment to commend Councillor Jackson for his efforts in getting increased funding for the fire company. The cost has gone from \$200 to \$800 per property in terms of what we need to pay within our tax structure. Mayor Ogden also noted that policing costs have increased substantially with the new Collective Agreement, as well as the retro active amount that we needed to pay.

Councillor Chandler noted that she echo's Councillor Jackson's thoughtful words and she thanked Councillor Dowling who has been a great spokesperson, leader, and advocate and she appreciated his leadership through the budget process.

Councillor Chandler stated that all staff has been fantastic and patient. She felt that as a group there was a lot of time spent discussing items line by line and seeking further information, and we really are moving forward with residents best interests at heart. In regard to the community campus, she felt that it will be a place that will bring pride and connectivity to our residents and she is excited to be a part of it. Councillor Chandler noted that when we look at studies, and even during Covid, we see the impacts of isolation and a lack of connectivity and how it affects people, and she is looking forward to being a part of something that brings people together – multi generational usage with a multitude of interests. Councillor Chandler added that Council has been very careful and mindful in their considerations and she thanked everyone for their leadership and their patience.

Mayor Ogden took a moment to thank Councillor Chandler who has been very successful in moving the recreation and arts and culture files forward. He noted that the parks and the events are the 'face' of the community.

Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant noted that as Deputy Mayor and chair of the Safety Services Committee, he would like to echo everyone's comments. He thanked the staff for all their hard work. Deputy Mayor Gallant stated that it was a big decision to raise taxes, but we see the Town growing and the growth has been fantastic. He added that once we start building the community campus/wellness centre the community will continue to grow.

At this time, Mayor Ogden read into the record a statement from Councillor Jeff MacDonald who could not able to attend the meeting.

Mr. Chair, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I offer my sincere regrets in not being able to join you for this important occasion. Unfortunately, our budget finalization process landed exactly in the middle of our education system's March break. Please forgive my absence. In place of my presence and vote, I am writing to you to express my support for the Town of Stratford's 2024-2025 budget as presented and tabled.

As always, our Council and staff have had to make difficult decisions. The needs of our community are numerous and resources are scarce. We have deferred expenditures where we could and have encouraged staff to find efficiencies in the use of Town resources. Through extensive consultation, we have identified priorities and potential for savings.

This budget represents our vision and our commitment to deliver the services that our growing municipality expects. We understand the responsibility that has been entrusted to us by the citizens of this municipality. We will never do anything to betray that trust.

Many opportunities for growth in population and services are present in the Town, but many challenges lie ahead for the Town to realize its full potential. We see the challenges before us and are prepared to meet them head on.

Mayor Ogden noted that Councillor Gordie Cox expressed to him that he supports the budget. He thanked both Councillor Cox and Councillor MacDonald, who are not in attendance, but both worked hard in their respective areas of the budget.

4. **Resolution FT001-2024 – Fees Bylaw, Bylaw #39 – Revised Schedule ‘A’ for Change in Multiple Fees**

Moved by Councillor Ron Dowling
Seconded by Councillor Jill Chandler

WHEREAS Council established a Fees Bylaw, Bylaw # 39, to set fees for licenses, permits, programs, facility rentals and other matters; and

WHEREAS Schedule ‘A’ of the bylaw contains the fee amounts that can be amended by simple resolution; and

WHEREAS the Town as part of the budget process reviews Schedule ‘A’ on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS it is desirable to amend the fee schedule.

BE IT RESOLVED that the attached revised Schedule ‘A’ to the Fees Bylaw, Bylaw #39, dated March 28, 2024, be hereby approved.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee and the Committee of the Whole.

Mayor Ogden noted that our costs have escalated in a number of areas, so these new fees, although they are not completely user pay, do go toward the cost of delivering services and that is the reason for the increases.

Question: **CARRIED**

5. Resolution FT002-2024 – Adoption of the 2024/25 Town Operating Budget

Moved by Councillor Ron Dowling

Seconded by Councillor Jody Jackson

BE IT RESOLVED that the 2024/25 Town of Stratford Operating Budget with revenue of 10,227,900, expenses of \$9,777,200 and an allocation to a reserve for future growth of 50,200 for an operating surplus of \$500, be hereby approved in accordance with the following revenue and expense tables:

	Actual 2023	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
Property Tax	\$5,809,680	\$6,195,800	\$7,040,100
CUSA Grant	\$1,450,222	\$1,655,000	\$1,700,300
Salary Recovery	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Rent Income	\$701,521	\$685,200	\$864,500
Police Fines	78,490	\$80,000	\$57,000
Fees and Permits	\$142,354	\$160,700	\$201,000
Recreation	\$133,959	\$139,300	\$178,800
Other	-\$269,409	\$770,600	\$176,200
Total Operating Revenue	\$8,056,816	\$9,696,600	\$10,227,900
Government Grants	1,969,863	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$10,026,678	\$9,696,600	\$10,227,900

Operating	Actual 2023	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
General Government Expenses	\$3,701,600	\$4,479,000	\$4,400,800

SPECIAL COUNCIL MINUTES MARCH 28, 2024

Finance Expenses	\$887,214	\$1,098,000	\$1,094,200
Recreation Expenses	\$813,473	\$866,400	\$948,900
Infrastructure Expenses	\$1,271,150	\$1,703,300	\$1,782,700
Planning Expenses	\$393,257	\$589,600	\$520,600
Depreciation	\$863,711	\$960,000	\$1,030,000
Total Expenses	\$7,930,405	\$9,696,300	\$9,777,200
Allocations and Reserves	\$0	\$0	\$ 450,200

Operating	Actual 2023	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
Total Surplus	\$126,411	\$300	\$500
Add: Depreciation	\$863,711	\$960,000	\$1,030,000
Less: Principal payment	(\$798,596)	(\$518,200)	(\$396,400)
Total Cash Flow Surplus	\$191,526	\$442,100	\$634,100

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

- the non-commercial municipal tax rate be set at \$0.47 per \$100 of assessment for 2024.
- the non-commercial non-resident municipal tax rate be set at \$0.94 per \$100 of assessment for 2024.
- the non-commercial apartment municipal tax rate be set at \$0.74 per \$100 of assessment for 2024.
- the non-commercial non-resident apartment municipal tax rate be set at \$1.48 per \$100 of assessment for 2024.
- the non-commercial motel municipal tax rate be set at \$0.74 per \$100 of assessment for 2024.
- the non-commercial non-resident motel municipal tax rate be set at \$1.48 per \$100 of assessment for 2024.
- the commercial municipal tax rate be set at \$1.35 per \$100 of assessment for 2024.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee and the Committee of the Whole.

Mayor Ogden noted that he was reluctant to raise taxes, but in this case it is really necessary, and residents will get something for this tax increase with improved programs, services, and facilities that residents want and need and also deserve. When you look at other municipalities of a comparable size, we have a great infrastructure gap – both social infrastructure and hard infrastructure. The whole Town needs to be connected to sewer and water. We need a wellness facility for

recreational purposes and for social gatherings. We need a lot of things in our Town and with our current tax structure we are not able to deliver these things and that is the reason for the proposed tax increase.

Question: **CARRIED**

6. Resolution FT003-2024 – Adoption of the 2024/25 Capital Budget and 4 Year Capital Plan

Moved by Councillor Ron Dowling

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant

WHEREAS as part of the new Municipal Government Act, the Town of Stratford is required to submit a five-year capital expenditure plan that includes an asset management program.

Capital	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
Park Development	\$200,000	\$250,000
Recreation Centre Equipment	\$9,000	\$111,000
Recreation Capital Projects	\$357,500	\$20,000
Sidewalk/Bike Path/Trail Construction	\$2,453,600	\$1,797,900
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	\$0	\$0
Street Lighting	\$35,000	\$20,000
Equipment Replacements/Additions	\$118,000	\$95,000
Town Centre Capital Repairs/Additions	\$205,000	\$354,000
Cotton Park Building Repairs/Additions	\$43,600	\$40,000
Other Building/Grounds Repairs/Additions	\$85,000	\$15,000
Electric Bike Sharing Program	\$125,000	\$0
Public Art	\$25,000	\$55,000
Computer Hardware	\$23,500	\$27,500
Solar on Town Buildings	\$550,000	\$305,000
Waterfront Park	\$2,400,000	\$100,000
Land	\$200,000	\$250,000
Community Campus Phase 1	13,829,100	16,366,750
Transit	\$187,000	\$374,000
Traffic Calming	\$15,000	\$20,000
Pondside Watershed Restoration	\$625,300	\$400,000
Maintenance Building	\$20,000	\$21,000

Total Capital Expenses	\$21,506,600	\$20,622,150
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BE IT RESOLVED that the 2024/25 Capital Budget per the following schedules be approved in the amount of \$20,622,150, less Investing in Canada funding of \$11,290,326 other funding of \$952,500 for a net Town Capital Budget of \$8,379,324.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the attached four-year capital plan covering the years 2025/26 to 2028/29 per the following schedules be approved.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee and the Committee of the Whole.

Mayor Ogden noted that this is part of the budget where we get something for our investment and hopefully we get the federal and provincial governments, to step up with a share of the infrastructure needs specifically the wellness centre. We need to have the same deal as other municipalities. We are really looking forward to having that discussion and having the same consideration given to Stratford as other communities with regard to funding our major infrastructure Needs.

Councillor Jackson noted that when we talk about investments in infrastructure, especially recreation infrastructure, and you look at other municipalities such as Three Rivers where the population is approximately 7500, Cornwall 6500, Tignish, O’Leary, and Kensington are all under in regard to population and they have all received significant funding assistance on recreational infrastructure, and he just wanted to put it on the record that the Town of Stratford would like a similar funding deal. He noted that it is a valid point that we are growing and we do need the infrastructure that others have, and the Town has a lot of catching up to do. Councillor Jackson stated that he is looking forward to a significant investment from other levels of government.

Question: **CARRIED**

7. Resolution FT004-2024 – Adoption of the 2024/25 Utility Operating Budget

Moved by Councillor Ron Dowling

Seconded by Councillor Jody Jackson

BE IT RESOLVED that the attached 2024-25 Stratford Utility Corporation operating budget with revenues of \$3,716,000 and expenses of \$3,715,600 for a surplus of \$400 be approved as follows:

Revenue	Actual 2023	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
Unmetered Sales Sewer	\$280,392	\$329,500	\$311,300
Unmetered Sales Water	\$52,881	\$62,900	\$56,000
Metered Sales Sewer	\$1,589,322	\$1,747,300	\$1,895,500
Metered Sales Water	\$1,081,567	\$1,225,100	\$1,295,000
Frontage Charges Sewer	\$29,333	\$29,000	\$31,100
Frontage Charges Water	8,674	\$7,500	\$12,000
Penalty Charges/Late Fees	\$34,629	\$36,000	\$40,000
Connection Fees	\$5,940	\$6,800	\$11,700
Interest Income	\$255	\$0	\$0
Other Income	\$27,346	\$45,000	\$63,400
Total Operating Revenue	\$3,110,338	\$3,489,100	\$3,716,000
Government Grants	\$454,650	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$3,564,988	\$3,489,100	\$3,716,000
Total Expenses	\$3,342,314	\$3,485,900	\$3,715,600

Total Surplus	\$222,674	\$3,200	\$400
Less: Donated Capital	(\$1,538,508)	\$0	\$0
Less: Government Transfers	(\$454,650)	\$0	\$0
Add: Depreciation	\$1,316,991	\$1,401,700	\$1,380,000
Less: Principal payments	(\$692,002)	(\$655,000)	(\$612,800)
Total Cash Flow Surplus	-\$1,145,494	\$749,900	\$767,600

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee and the Committee of the Whole.

Mayor Ogden stated that this is a moderate increase, but it is an increase partly driven by some of the costs of our processing our wastewater. Councillor Dowling noted that we are very fortunate in Stratford in that our committee structure is designed whereby the majority of the members are residents of

Stratford and they have significant input into budgets, Town projects and other initiatives.

Question: **CARRIED**

8. Resolution FT005-2024 – Adoption of the 2024/25 Utility Operating Budget

Moved by Councillor Ron Dowling

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant

WHEREAS as part of the new Municipal Government Act the Town of Stratford is required to submit a five-year capital expenditure plan that includes an asset management program; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the following tables for the 2024/25 Utility Capital Budget be approved in the amount of \$8,938,200 less Investing in Canada funding of \$2,200,638, Municipal Strategic Component funding of \$1,469,894 and other funding \$400,000 for a net Capital expenditure of \$4,867,668.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following table for the four-year capital plan be approved covering the years 2025/26 to 2028/29:

Capital	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
Misc Capital Items	\$241,000	\$110,000
Water and Sewer Extensions	\$5,690,000	\$7,453,200
Inflow Infiltration Study Recommendations	\$100,000	\$0
Generators and Fire Hydrants	\$0	\$1,300,000
Metering	\$75,000	\$75,000
Total Capital Expenses	\$6,106,000	\$8,938,200
Capital Funding	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
Other Funding	\$600	\$0
MSC Funding	\$1,058,700	\$1,469,894
Investing in Canada	\$1,073,600	\$2,200,638
Disaster Mitigation	\$400,000	\$400,000
Total Capital Funding	\$2,532,900	\$4,070,532
Net Capital Expenditure	\$3,573,100	\$4,867,668

Four Year Capital Plan

Capital	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29
Misc Capital Items	\$535,000	\$485,000	\$325,000	\$329,000
Water and Sewer Extensions	\$5,925,000	\$6,305,000	\$9,657,000	\$8,730,000
Inflow Infiltration Recommendations	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Meter Inventory	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Total Capital Expenses	\$6,635,000	\$6,965,000	\$10,157,000	\$9,234,000
Capital Funding	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29
Investing in Canada	\$3,446,510	\$3,890,157	\$6,641,499	\$6,401,709
MSC Funding	\$137,500	\$400,000	\$0	\$0
Total Capital Funding	\$3,584,010	\$4,290,157	\$6,641,499	\$6,401,709
Net Capital Expenditure	\$3,050,990	\$2,674,844	\$3,515,501	\$2,832,291

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee and the Committee of the Whole.

Question: **CARRIED**

9. Resolution FT006-2024 – Adoption of the 2024/25 Utility Tariff

Moved by Councillor Ron Dowling

Seconded by Councillor

WHEREAS a comprehensive review of water and sewer expenses, as well as a projected 5 year capital plan was completed in 2020; and

WHEREAS these projections were analyzed through utility rate models to determine the rates for the water and sewer rate payers; and

WHEREAS expenses have increased substantially due to the high cost of inflation there will be an increase to utility rates for the current year.

BE IT RESOLVED that the attached Stratford Utility tariff for 2024, which incorporates the following, be hereby approved:

- the unmetered water rate for a single family dwelling (SFD) will increase to \$92.61 per quarter as of April 2024;
- The unmetered sewer rate for a single family dwelling (SFD) will increase to \$138.67 per quarter as of April 2024;
- The water base rate for a 5/8 meter customer will increase to \$41.08 per quarter as of April 2024;
- The sewer base rate for a 5/8 meter customer will increase to \$61.49 per quarter as of April 2024;
- the consumption charge for metered water will increase to \$1.0164 per cubic meter as of April 2024; and
- the consumption charge for metered sewer will increase to \$1.5257 per cubic meter as of April 2024.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Finance and Technology Committee and the Committee of the Whole.

Question: **CARRIED**

Deputy Mayor Gallant recused himself before the reading of the planning resolution

10. Resolution PH004-2024 Maximum Lot Coverage Increases to 40% for Seven (7) Lots in Phase I of the Reddin Meadows Subdivision

Moved by Councillor Jody Jackson

Seconded by Councillor Ron Dowling

WHEREAS at a regular Council meeting held August 9, 2023, preliminary approval was granted to an application from Landfest Company Ltd. to subdivide parcel numbers 1061175, 1061167, and 329011 (approx. 14.01 acres in total) in accordance with the submitted Development Scheme prepared by Fathom Studios in association with SableArc, dated July 2021. The Development Scheme references 84 total units (two 6-unit townhouses, seven 5-unit townhouses, two 4-unit townhouses, two 3-unit townhouses, and 23 single unit dwellings); and

WHEREAS a request from Hansen Property Group (the new landowner) has been received to increase the maximum Lot Coverage Ratio for seven (7) of the eleven (11) single unit dwelling lots in Phase 1 in the new Reddin Heights cul-de-sac from 30% to 40%; and

WHEREAS in accordance with section 11.2.6(d) of the Town of Stratford Zoning Development Bylaw: (5) Maximum Lot Coverage shall be 30%, provided however, that Council may permit a coverage of up to 40% where it deems there would not be an adverse impact on adjoining properties, subject to such terms and conditions as may be established by Council; and

WHEREAS planning staff has examined the lot grading plans and proposed buildings in conjunction with the stormwater management plan and cannot determine that there will not be adverse impacts on adjoining properties due to the increased lot coverage ratios. Therefore, planning staff is recommending that the civil engineer who designed the Reddin Meadows Storm Water Management Plan submit correspondence to the Town ensuring that the increased lot coverage ratios will not adversely impact adjoining properties.

WHEREAS through an email poll, the Planning and Heritage Committee has reviewed this application, and felt that by increasing the permitted maximum lot coverage to 40% will not cause any adverse impacts on the neighborhood; and

BE IT RESOLVED that maximum lot coverage for lots 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, as shown on the subdivision plan for Phase 1 of the Reddin Meadows Subdivision, be increased from 30% to 40%, provided that:

- a) all of the buildings are located outside of drainage easements and within the development standards established by approved Development Scheme and Town of Stratford Zoning and Development Bylaw; and
- b) correspondence be submitted to the Town, from the civil engineer who designed the Reddin Meadows Storm Water Management Plan, confirming that the increased lot coverage ratio will not adversely impact adjoining properties.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Heritage Committee.

Councillor Chandler stated that in terms of correspondence being submitted to the Town from a civil engineer – what is the timeline for that information to be received, and the director of planning Dale McKeigan replied that he will speak to the agent for the developer, but he anticipates that it will be sometime next week.

Question: **CARRIED**

Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant re-joined the meeting at this time.

11. Resolution SS003-2024 Appointment of Directors to the Cross Roads Rural Fire Company

Moved by Councillor Jody Jackson

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant

WHEREAS the Town of Stratford has a right and responsibility to appoint seven members to the Board of Directors of the Cross Roads Rural Community Fire Company; and

WHEREAS the Board is currently in need of two members to bring the total number of members to seven; and

WHEREAS residents Bernadette Milner and Rick Richard have agreed to put their names forward to serve on the Board.

BE IT RESOLVED that the following residents be appointed to serve on the Board of Directors of the Cross Roads Rural Community Fire Company:

Community Representatives:

- Bernadette Milner (1st year of a 3 year term)
- Rick Richard (1st year of a 3 year term)

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Safety Services Committee and the Committee of the Whole.

Question: **CARRIED**

12. Resolution CW002-2024 Housing Accelerator Fund

Moved by Councillor Jill Chandler

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant

WHEREAS the Town of Stratford is committed to addressing the housing crisis and ensuring that its residents have access to safe and attainable housing options; and

WHEREAS the Housing Accelerator Fund, established by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), is a funding initiative designed to provide financial support and resources to municipalities in developing attainable housing projects; and

WHEREAS the Town Council recognizes the significance and potential impact of the Housing Accelerator Fund in meeting the housing needs of our community; and

WHEREAS the Town Council believes that collaborating with the CMHC through the Housing Accelerator Fund will enhance our ability to develop and implement sustainable housing projects; and

WHEREAS the Housing Accelerator Fund application process requires a Municipal Resolution expressing support and a commitment to collaboration from the local government.

BE IT RESOLVED that Council approves the proposal to enter into the Housing Accelerator Fund Contribution Agreement with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer are hereby authorized to execute standard contracts and agreements to implement this resolution.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole.

Question: **CARRIED**

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Chandler noted that for anyone watching the live stream or for those who may watch later, the budget process is lengthy and a lot of time and consideration goes into it, and she would encourage residents to become active participants as we go forward in future years.

23. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Mayor Steve Ogden

Jeremy Crosby, CAO