



NOTICE

MEETING: St Mary's Municipal Council
Committee of the Whole

DATE: Wednesday, January 17th, 2024

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: St. Mary's Municipality
Council Chambers, Sherbrooke, NS

Please advise if unable to attend



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, January 17th, 2024 at 4:00pm

We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kmaqi the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Additions to the Agenda
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes: COTW held January 3rd, 2024
6. Business Arising from Minutes
7. Correspondence – Letter from Municipality of Guysborough
8. Presentation: DEANS – Coastal Nova Scotia
9. Other Matters of Business
 - a. Public Works Water Plant Repairs
 - b. 2024 2025 Operating and Capital Budget Deliberations Timeline
 - c. 2023 2025 Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption
 - d. 2023 Property Tax Assessment Roll Summary
 - e. 2024 2025 Uniform Assessment Roll Summary
 - f. Recreation Services for Seniors
 - g. Sunflower Accessibility Planning
 - h. Kairos Blanket Exercise
 - i. 211 local landmarks
 - j. Land Survey

10. In Camera: Per MGA Section 22: Personnel

Adjournment



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of The Whole (COTW) Meeting

Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024

We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kma'ki the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

1. Meeting, Date & Time:

Warden Wier called the COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council to order on Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Sherbrooke, N.S.

2. Attending:

Warden Greg Wier

Deputy Warden James Fuller

Councillor Everett Baker

Councillor Courtney Mailman

Councillor Beulah Malloy

Councillor Charlene Zinck

Absent with Regrets:

Councillor James Harpell

Also Attending:

Doug Patterson, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Marian Fraser, Director of Finance (DOF)

Jadzia Graham, Interim Municipal Clerk

Denise Dunn, Economic Development Officer (EDO)

Tyler MacLaughlin, Interim Director of Community Development and Recreation

3. Additions to the Agenda:

- Addition to Correspondence 7 d. Thank You Card from St. Marys Food Bank
- Removal of 9. In-Camera: Contract Negotiations
- Addition to Other Matters of Business 8 i. C&D Waste Disposal

4. Approval of the Agenda:

On the motion of Deputy Warden Fuller, and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council approved the agenda with the additions.

Motion approved.

5. Approval of Minutes:

On the motion of Councillor Malloy, and seconded by Councillor Zinck, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held December 6th, 2023.

Motion approved.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- There was no business arising from the minutes.

7. Correspondence:

- a. 2024 Communities in Bloom Atlantic Edition Invitation
- Councillor Mailman is part of the Garden Club and thought it would be great for them to look into Communities in Bloom.

b. Exemption of Volunteer Emergency Services from New Fuel Charges

- Councillor Malloy thought that staff should write a letter to follow up on the exemption of Volunteer Emergency Services from New Fuel Charges.

On recommendation of Councillor Malloy, and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council agree to write a letter to follow up on the carbon tax exemption for volunteer emergency providers.

Recommendation adopted.

c. Ministerial Letter from Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage

- Tyler MacLaughlin, Interim Director of Community Development and Recreation, informed the Council of the Letter received from the Minister of Communities Culture Tourism, and Heritage, Allan Macmaster approving funding for the Active Communities Fund program.

d. Thank You Card from St. Mary's Foodbank.

- Warden Greg Wier, informed Council of the Thank You card received by the St. Marys Foodbank.

8. Other Matters of Business:

a. Volunteer Awards:

- See the attached report.
- The Volunteer Awards are an annual event to showcase all the volunteering that occurs in St. Mary's. This event also highlights the Volunteer of the Year for the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's.
- For 47 years, ever since he moved to Nova Scotia, Michael Porter has been spreading joy throughout the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's with his music. In 2019, Michael would bring his guitar and equipment to play at the grassroots community market in Sherbrooke. As he played, he collected donations for the St. Mary's Food Bank. Michael consistently volunteers his time and equipment, ensuring live music at the Sherbrooke Saturday Market, which has grown and relocated to the Heritage Park at the Historic Sherbrooke Village. Furthermore, he volunteers his musical talents for local benefit concerts, supporting those in need. Michael's gift of music has brought joy to the community and raised funds for worthy causes.
- The St. Mary's District Lion's Club is a central location in the Municipality, can hold a large event, and offers catering services. A program will be put together for the event, and the Warden will have the opportunity to speak to thank people for attending and provide some information about each of the nominees. Invites to the event would include all nominees, council, MLA Greg Morrow, our volunteer firefighters, Rae Gunn and Eric Lumsden from Community, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, as well as a general invite to the public. The Municipality will create and print certificates for all nominees. Due to the timing of the event, there will be a winter theme and slogan.
- The date for the Volunteer Awards is yet to be set. Once a date has been approved, It will go to Council so that Councillors may attend. Invitations have to be made and sent out to volunteers, volunteer firefighters, Communities Culture Tourism, and Heritage, as well as a slogan and theme for the event.

b. Canada Summer Jobs Grant:

- See the attached report.

- The Canada Summer Jobs grant provides funding for the Community Development and Recreation Department (CDRD) to hire summer staff for our 2024 summer day camps. With this grant, the department is looking to hire three summer day camp leaders.
- The Canada Summer Jobs grant is a 50% funded grant. The department is applying to fund three-day camp leaders for nine weeks at 34 hours per week, at an hourly wage of \$15.25 (minimum wage after April 1st, 2024). This equates to a total ask of \$7,004.34.
- The Municipality will be responsible for the equivalent amount, as well as Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCs), such as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan and Vacation Pay.

On recommendation of Deputy Warden Fuller, and seconded by Councillor Mailman, Council agree to direct staff to proceed with the application for the 2024 Canada Summer Jobs grant, as outlined in this report.

Recommendation adopted.

c. Community Infrastructure and access-Ability Grant Sessions:

- See the attached report.
- The Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage (CCTH) has opened its Community Infrastructure and Access-ability grants for the fiscal year 2024-25. This is a fantastic opportunity for local organizations and entities to enhance and improve community facilities, helping to support a more accessible and vibrant future for everyone. The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's will be hosting an information session for eligible applicants on January 15, 2024, in which a representative from the Department of CCTH will attend in person (weather dependent).
- Eligible applicants include Registered non-profit societies, Mi'kmaw Band Councils, Municipalities & villages, and schools & post-secondary institutions with facilities available for community recreation use. Applications opened on December 11th, 2023, and the deadline is February 14th, 2024.
- Available Grant Programs:
 1. Community ACCESS-Ability Program: Supports renovations and improvements to make community buildings more accessible.
 2. Community Facility Improvement Program: Aids in repairs and upgrades to community facilities open for public use, such as community halls.
 3. Legion Capital Assistance Program: Assists Royal Canadian Legions with capital upgrades.
 4. Recreation Facility Development / Rink Revitalization Fund: Supports repairs and upgrades to community recreation facilities and rinks.
- Doug Patterson, Chief Administration Officer (CAO) informed Council that it is a great opportunity to help the non-profit organizations, and urges legions, lion's halls and non-profits to apply to help with renovations, activities, and events.

On recommendation of Councillor Baker, and seconded by Councillor Zinck, Council agree to direct municipal staff to submit an application to the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage for the 2024-25 Recreation Facility Development/Rink Revitalization Fund for Phase 2 of the outside structural repairs and siding replacement to the St. Mary's Recplex and furthermore directs staff if possible, to apply for grant funding to complete a facility needs assessment for the St. Mary's Recplex.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor Malloy, and seconded by Councillor Mailman, Council approves mileage expenses for any councillor who attends the January 15 Community Grant presentation in support of their constituents.

Recommendation adopted.

Marian Fraser, Director of Finance left the meeting at 4:22 p.m.

Marian Fraser, Director of Finance joined the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

d. Provincial Economic Development:

- See the attached report.
- St. Mary's Chief Administration Officer (CAO) Doug Patterson and Economic Development Officer (EDO) Denise Dunn met with the newly appointed Director of Community Economic Development from the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development on the request of the EDO to follow up on outcomes from the Tool Review and ensure St. Mary's' alignment with and discuss collaboration opportunities with respect to provincial goals.
- The NS Department of Economic Development has a mandate to review investment and attraction mechanisms and structures to ensure they support our communities and deliver the most efficient and accountable format for economic development.
- The 3 key focus areas for the Director, Community Economic Development are:
 1. Full Coverage across the province to support businesses
 2. Consistency of product, delivery of service
 3. Ease of navigation (i.e. municipal EDO, Invest NS, REN, or ACOA, who approach first and what each can provide.)
- Considerations discussed as outlined in the report include: Digital nomads and opportunities for St. Mary's to attract, NIMBYism, Connector Programs, REN's and Regional Economic Networks.

e. Flood Mapping:

- See the attached report.
- Flood Mapping is in Phase 2, We have been sharing and posting on social media asking the public for their feedback on areas where flooding exists, areas of existing/ past damage, and areas of concern for the future around the municipality.
- Stakeholders and the public are invited to join the interactive mapping tool to identify risk areas throughout St. Mary's on any road, property, stream, river, lake, etc. The mapping tool is hosted on an online platform (Social PinPoint), including a questionnaire and mapping. The link can be found on The Municipal Website under the "Community engagement" tab.
- Residences and the public are urged to contact their local Councillor if assistance is required for hard copy photographs.

f. Housing – Municipal Affairs & Housing:

- See the attached report.
- Denise Dunn, Economic Development Officer (EDO), Doug Patterson, Chief Administration Officer (CAO), Marian Fraser, Director of Finance (DOF), Jadzia Graham, Interim Municipal Clerk, and Deputy Warden James Fuller informed the Council of their meeting with Municipal Affairs and Housing on December 19th 2023.

- There are several options in moving forward with the development of the property currently reserved for housing in Sherbrooke. Partnerships will be essential to ensure appropriate funding is in place, skill sets acquired, sustainability, and equity goals are achieved.
- Discussion with the province determined ways in which they can assist including:
 - a. Proceeds of sale requirements and options under the MGA.
 - b. Provincial programs are stackable with federal and CMHC programs.
 - c. Ability to partner with the province for joint land development of Municipal and Provincial properties.
 - d. Funding is available to Non-Profit housing organizations in this area.
 - e. New programming from Efficiency One is coming in 2024 that will be geared towards new construction.
 - f. The province can assist the Municipality with developer agreements and processes. This includes conditional land commitments for the purpose of ensuring the original intent of housing is maintained.
 - g. Forgivable loans for housing developers who are willing to build affordable units.
- Councillor Mailman highlighted concerns from residents that childcare is a barrier to economic development and making St. Mary's a permanent home. Also noted was the childcare need for long-term care facilities and hospital staff. This presents an opportunity to lobby the provincial government, concerning new health care developments, to include childcare as an essential component of such projects. Councillor Mailman stated there is an abundance of studies highlighting the positive outcomes of intergenerational care.

On recommendation of Councillor Mailman, and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council agree to request staff to investigate and bring back to Council the best business practice options for the creation of a neighbourhood concept based on wellness, that could include a long-term care facility and a hospital along with other things and facilities.

Recommendation adopted.

g. Draft Letter for Cellular Service:

- See the attached report.
- The province is investing \$47.3 million to start the new Cellular for Nova Scotia Program to expand telecommunications infrastructure and communications networks throughout the province. Cellular Service is low to none at all (dead zones) in most districts of the Municipality, and it is a very big safety concern.
- A draft letter for cellular service was completed by staff to send to our local MLA, Premier Houston, and Minister Fraser.
- Council reviewed and approved the draft letter and staff is going to do a final copy to send to the local MLA, with all of the Councillors to sign in support.
- Municipal staff are going to share and post on social media as well as the Newsletter.

On recommendation of Deputy Warden Fuller, and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approves and fully supports the Municipality's written letter to the honourable Sean Fraser, MLA and to the honourable Tim Houston, Premier in support of the municipality's request for provincial support of improved local

cellular phone services and that council sincerely hopes and requests the help of the province to improve local phone cellular service. The letter is to be signed by (choice of Warden or all members of Council).

Recommendation adopted.

h. Library Boxes

- See the attached staff report.
- Tyler MacLaughlin, Interim Director of Community Development and Recreation, informed the Council of the Library Boxes that will be installed in the districts of the municipality. They are "take-a-book, leave-a-book" style boxes available to the public. The Library Boxes will be installed in the late winter or early spring in various communities within St. Mary's.

i. C&D Waste Disposal

- Teddy Stevens, Director of Public Works, and Doug Patterson, Chief Administration Officer (CAO) informed the Council of the Construction and Demolition (C&D) pile at the Municipal Transfer Station.
 - 1.) Staff to work actively in follow up on the municipality's written request for provincial assistance with the office of the minister and with appropriate provincial staff.
 - 2.) Staff to study other options for C&D disposal including engaging other services and other storage locations for the C&D disposal and storage service.
 - 3.) Staff to study C&D dumping fees review fee options with total fees in line with other local municipalities.
 - 4.) Delay tender to building new transfer station for the time being until we know that specifications meet future needs.
 - 5.) To suspend acceptance of C&D material until a new service plan is available (effective January 9, 2024.) with notice on municipal web and Facebook and to notify existing construction and demolition (C&D) permit holders.
 - 6.) To maintain all residential trash services including curbside pick up, bi-weekly bulky item collection, and residential trash drop off at the transfer station.

On motion of Councillor Zinck, and seconded by Councillor Mailman, Council direct staff to work on investigation and planning of the following initiatives in order to find solutions that can effectively update our construction and demolition waste disposal services. Further that staff provide regular and frequent updates to council on progress.

Recommendation adopted.

Letter to Province (Solid Waste)

- The province is coming out with a new program for Solid Waste disposal, this new program will affect our C&D cells for the Municipal Transfer Station.
- The Municipality is dedicated to the environment and economic development. St. Mary's supports the province's goals to grow the population and solve the current housing shortage. An effective C&D service allows for increased housing and enables growth. Our local C&D service provides a vital means of supporting residential renewal via the demolition of old housing that no longer meets needs while enabling new residential building opportunities.

- The Municipality has endeavoured to provide an easy-to-access C&D service to benefit businesses, housing, and overall growth. The open approach is the best way to reduce dangerous and unsightly dwelling challenges and prevent illegal dumping.

On recommendation of Councillor Baker, and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council approves and fully supports the Municipality's written letter to the honourable Timothy Halman, Minister for the Department of Environment and Climate Change in support of the municipality's request for provincial support to help us adapt to the newly established Solid Waste Management Facility Guidelines and that council sincerely hopes and requests the assistance of the province in order for the municipality to maintain a quality, development friendly construction and disposal waste service. The letter is to be signed by (choice or Warden or all members of Council).

Recommendation adopted.

Adjournment

On motion of Councillor Malloy, and seconded by Councillor Baker, there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Motion approved.



Office of the Warden

January 4, 2024

Warden Wier & Council
Municipality of the District of St. Mary's
PO Box 296
Sherbrooke, NS
B0J 3C0

Re: Invitation to a Joint Council Meeting

Dear Warden Wier & Council,

At the January 3rd, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough, a discussion was held about hosting a joint Council's session with our colleagues from your Municipality and the Town of Mulgrave.

Please accept this letter as official invitation from the Council of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough to attend a joint council's session at the Chedabucto Lifestyle Complex on April 10th, 2024 at 4:00pm. Each Council will have the opportunity to add 3-4 items to the agenda that will then be up for discussion among all Councils. Refreshments and light snacks will be served.

You may confirm with Magdelyn Connolly, Municipal Clerk at mconnolly@modg.ca or (902)533-3705 if your Council is interested in attending. She will re-confirm with each Municipality in mid March and request the agenda items. On behalf of Council, we look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you to discuss agenda items that may benefit us all.

Sincerely,

Vernon Pitts

Warden

Maintenance of Water Treatment Facility

Replacement of Cushion Tanks (Water Plant Repairs)

SUMMARY

It was identified by Public Works staff that 3 out of the 6 cushion tanks need to be replaced.

BACKGROUND

During recent inspections and maintenance of the cushion tanks at the Water Treatment facility, Public Works staff discovered that 3 of the 6 cushion tanks at the facility have ruptured bladders within them. These cushion tanks are what severely reduces the water hammer and pressure surges in the distribution system. This in turn reduces the chance of leaks within the distribution system.

CONSIDERATIONS

Public Works staff have also received pricing on replacement cushion tanks for the Water Treatment Facility. The cost of the new cushion tanks is \$2,505.72 each for a total of \$7517.16 plus tax. Public Works are working on getting additional quotes for these tanks.

The fund will come from the capital reserve fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That municipal council approve the necessary costs, to replace the three cushion tanks in order to protect the distribution system from breakage and leaks to maximum cost limit of \$8500. Plus tax.

Staff Report



2024 2025 Operating and Capital Budget Deliberations Timeline

Department of Finance

SUMMARY

This report will help aid both Municipal Council and staff in preparing a timeline and overall direction for the preparation of the 2024-2025 Municipal Operating and Capital Budgets for the Municipal. In conclusion this report will help determine and set the date for the Annual General meeting of St. Mary's Municipal Council where the 2024-2025 Budgets will be approved and the 2024-25 tax rates will be set.

PROPOSED 2024 2025 BUDGET PREP TIMELINE

Items/Topic	Date/Meeting
Staff Report – 2024 2025 Operating and Capital Budget Deliberation Timeline	COTW – January 17 th , 2024
Staff Report – 2024 Assessment Roll Summary	COTW – January 17 th , 2024
Staff Report – 2024 2025 Uniform Assessment	COTW – January 17 th , 2024
Staff Report – 2024 2025 Low Income Tax Exp Application	COTW – January 17 th , 2024
Presentations by Staff/Departments on 2024 2025 Priorities and Projects	COTW – February 7 th , 2024
Presentation of 1 st Draft of Municipal Operating Budget	COTW– February 21 st 2024
Presentations by Staff/Departments on 2024 2025 Priorities and Projects	COTW– February 21 st 2024
Staff Report – 2024-2025 General Government Grants	COTW – March 6 th , 2024
Presentation of 2024 2025 Capital Budgets	COTW – March 6 th , 2024
Presentation of 2 nd Draft of 2024 2025 Municipal Budgets	COTW – March 20 th , 2024
Possible date for final draft presented to Council at COTW – if required	COTW – April 3 rd , 2024
Annual General Meeting	AGM - Monday, April 8 th at 5:00pm

COTW Meeting – January 17TH, 2024

Staff Report



RECOMMENDATIONS

Council recommends setting the 2024 2025 Annual General Meeting date as Monday, April 8th, 2024 at 5:00pm.

2024-2025 Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption

Department of Finance

SUMMARY

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's provides assistance to low-income homeowners to help pay their residential property taxes. Qualified applicants will receive a credit which is applied directly to the tax account.

The following report is designed to provide Council with an overview of the application form, process and options for potential changes to the Municipal Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption Program for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Application form is attached with highlighted areas of change required.

BACKGROUND

Each year prior to Council adopting their annual budget Council reviews the qualification guidelines for the program including the amount for the annual income from all sources of all adults living in the household for the previous calendar year and the dollar amount of the credit applied.

For the 2023 application the total income threshold was set at less or equal to \$24,400 (increased from the 2022 application of \$22,600) and the tax exemption amount was set at \$175 (increased from 2022 application of \$110). Increases to the income threshold is historically increased based on the cost of living and consumer price index information (CPI).

For the fiscal year 2023-2024 there were 56 eligible applicants who utilized the program, which equaled a \$9,800 operating expense for the Municipality.

Advertisements for the program are done through the monthly Municipal Newsletter and on the Municipal Website.

CONSIDERATIONS

Annual Income Threshold

- CPI data for December-to-December Nova Scotia All Items has not yet been released, but November to November NS All items CPI was set at 2.5% and October to October NS All items was set at 3.2% (which is also the PVSC Assessment CAP rate).
- Given this information the increase to the total household annual income threshold could range from \$25,010 to \$25,181. Provided that the CPI data was not available at the time of this report Council could consider setting the amount slightly higher than \$25,181 to ensure any December CPI increases are captured.

Staff Report



Tax Exemption Amount Credited to Account

- The 2023/2024 application tax exemption amount was increase from \$110 to \$175 due to the amount not being increased for several years prior.
- Council may consider leaving the amount at \$175 per application or increasing the exemption amount by CPI as well. If CPI is considered the amount should be increased to \$180 per application.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend that council approve the 2024/2025 Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption with the total annual household income threshold set at less or equal to \$_____ and the tax exemption credit amount set at \$___ per application, all other eligibility requirements to remain the same as outlined in the application.



Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption 2024/25

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's provides assistance to homeowners to help pay their residential property taxes. Qualified applicants will receive a credit which is applied directly to the tax account

To Qualify:

- You must be a **Canadian citizen and permanent** resident of St. Mary's Municipality and
- Own the assessed property and occupy it as your home and
- Prior year's property taxes must be paid in full
- Annual income from all sources for the previous calendar year for yourself, spouse, and other family members that reside in the same household was equal to or less than annual amount set (based on line 150 of the income tax *Notice of Assessment*)

Exemption Value:

The exemptions provided will be based on the following income levels:

Annual Income	Tax Exemption
Less than or equal to \$	\$

How to Apply:

- After you have filed your personal income tax return for 2023 and received your Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency, complete the Municipal Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption form
- Attached copies of the 2023 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Notice of Assessment for each adult residing in the home
- Sample Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

 Canada Revenue Agency Agence du revenu du Canada **NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT** T451 E (08)

Date May 5, 2007	Name Jane Doe	Social Insurance no. 123 456 789	Tax year 2007	Tax centre Shawinigan QC G9N 7S6
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Summary

Line	\$ Amount
150 Total Income.....	00,000
Deductions from total income.....	000
236 Net Income.....	00,000
260 Taxable Income.....	00,000



- If you do not have your CRA Notice of Assessment for 2023 you can call 1-800-959-8281
- Applications must be received by the Municipality no later than December 31, 2024
- Applicants must re-apply each year



Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption **2024/2025**

Tax Account #	
Name of Property Owner(s)	
Complete Mailing Address	
Telephone #	
# of Adults (age 18 or over) residing in home	

(a) Applicant total income (line 150) \$ _____

(b) Spouse/Common-Law Partner (line 150) \$ _____

(c) Other individuals in same household (line 150) \$ _____

TOTAL of all Income from above \$ _____

***Proof of income must be provided (Copy of **2023** CRA Notice of Assessment for each adult living in the home)**

I _____ of _____
in the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, in the County of Guysborough and Province of Nova Scotia, hereby apply for the **RESIDENTIAL LOW INCOME PROPERTY EXEMPTION** on taxes.
I/we, residents of the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, the owners and occupants of the above property, certify that the information on the application is true and complete, and that the household income from all sources during **2023** was below the limit set out in this application. I/We understand the exemption for **2024/2025** will be \$ _____. I/We understand that no application for an exemption will be received after December 31, 2024. I/We understand that no exemption will be granted to low income applicants if prior year's taxes remain unpaid.

Signature(s) _____ **Date:** _____

To be signed by Councillor, Municipal Admin Staff or Commissioner of Oaths

Sworn to in the County of Guysborough and the Province of Nova Scotia this ____ day of _____ 20__

Signature: _____

Staff Report



2024 Property Tax Assessment Roll Summary

Department of Finance

SUMMARY

The following report is designed to provide Council and staff with an overview of the 2024 Property Tax Assessments for the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's compared to the 2023 Property Tax Assessments. A comparison of the potential tax revenue impacts is also provided and analyzed.

BACKGROUND

Annually on December 31st, Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) sends the complete property tax assessment roll to each municipality in Nova Scotia individually. Municipalities use the assessment roll to calculate property taxes. Once received, staff review the roll and potential revenue impacts ahead of the Municipal budgets to assist with budget deliberations. It is important to note that it is not until January 9th, 2024 that PVSC mails out property assessment notices to Nova Scotia property owners. Property owners have until February 8th, 2024 to appeal their assessments with PVSC. Appeal changes and rulings are not reflected in this year-over-year comparison report.

CONSIDERATIONS

	2023/2024	2024/2025	Difference	Revenue Increase
Residential Assessment	165,897,200	183,776,100	17,878,900	\$173,425
Resource Assessment	27,807,100	29,503,500	1,696,400	\$16,455
Commercial Assessment	25,894,800	26,754,800	860,000	\$19,608
# of Dwellings	1,916	1,907	-9 units	Effects area rates
Dollar value of one cent on tax rate	\$21,691	\$24,003	\$2,312	n/a
CAP Rate on Residential Assessments	7.7%	3.2%	n/a	n/a

- Revenue increase section is based on using 2023/24 tax rates applied to the 2024/25 property tax assessments. Total potential revenue increase if the tax rates remain the same as 2023/24 is \$209,488.

COTW Meeting – January 17TH, 2024

Staff Report



- Under the Residential Assessment section, there are 2,760 accounts, of which 1,841 are in the CAP program and 919 are not. Therefore 1/3 of the residential accounts have either transferred ownership (other than relatives) within the last year removing them from CAP eligibility (and jumping assessments to market value) or less than 50% of the account is owned by non-Nova Scotian residents. The full CAP eligibility requirements can be found at <https://www.pvsc.ca/understand-your-assessment/capped-assessment-program>.
- Overall increase in taxable assessments from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 is 9.31%.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For information purposes only to aid in the 2024/2025 budget deliberations and show the potential increase in tax revenue from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

Staff Report



2024 2025 Uniform Assessment

Department of Finance

SUMMARY

Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year Municipalities across Nova Scotia receive their individual uniform assessment (UA) calculation schedule to assist with budget preparations and deliberations.

BACKGROUND

The definition and calculation details of uniform assessment for a municipality can be found in the Municipal Grants Act under Section 14. A municipality's UA is used to calculate the provincial mandatory education tax expense by multiplying it by the provincial education tax rate. The provincial education tax rate has remained unchanged for the last several years.

CONSIDERATIONS

	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Uniform Assessment	198,581,346	209,306,488	230,636,339
Education Rate	\$0.3048 per \$100 of UA	\$0.3048 per \$100 of UA	\$0.3048 per \$100 of UA
Education Expense	\$605,546	\$637,966	\$702,980

- Based on the above information and the 2024-2025 Uniform Assessment the Education expense for the Municipality for the fiscal year 2024-2025 will increase by \$65,013, a 10.19% increase from 2023-2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For information purposes only to aid in the 2024/2025 budget deliberations and show the Education Expense for 2024/25.

Uniform Assessment Calculation Schedule - 2024-2025

Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Line Number	Line Name	Revenue Residential & Resource	Revenue Commercial	Assessment or CVR Res	Assessment or CVR Comm	Total
UA1001	Tax Rate (per \$100 of Assessment)			0.97000	2.2800	
UA1011	Assessed Market Value			220,582,900	25,561,600	246,144,500
UA1021	Capping Adjustment			-27,354,000		-27,354,000
UA1031	Taxable Assessment			193,228,900	25,561,600	218,790,500
UA1041	Special Tax Agreements					
UA1051	Shared Tax Revenue-Section 14(2)					
UA1061	25% of Seasonal Tourist Business Assessment					
UA1071	Charitable Properties-Section 14(1)(b)		-35,190		-1,543,421	-1,543,421
UA1081	Water Utility					
UA1091	Misc Adjustment (3% Other)					
UA1101	Special Tax Agreements					
UA1111	Shared Tax Revenue-Section 14(2)					
UA1121	Fire Protection, Provincial Properties	1,103	1,649	113,711	72,325	186,036
UA1131	Crown Timber Lands		118,834		5,212,018	5,212,018
UA1141	Federal Government Agencies GIL	5,709	16,224	588,557	711,579	1,300,136
UA1151	Provincial Government GIL	8,945	16,077	922,165	705,132	1,627,297
UA1161	Properties of Supported Institutions					
UA1201	Farm Property Acreage	10,845		1,118,041		1,118,041
UA1205	Conservation GIL					
UA1211	Forest Property Tax (Less than 50,000 Acres)	13,883		1,431,237		1,431,237
UA1215	Forest Property Tax (50,000 Acres or More)		28,624		1,255,439	1,255,439
UA1221	Recreational Property Tax					
UA1225	Bell Aliant		18,371		805,746	805,746
UA1231	Nova Scotia Power Inc. GIL		3,988		174,912	174,912
UA1235	Nova Scotia Liquor Commission				278,400	278,400
UA1241	Other Provincial Government Agencies GIL					
UA1245	Wind Farm Payment from Provincial GIL					
UA1251	Wind Farm Taxes From Developers					
UA1255	Total Uniform Assessment			197,402,611	33,233,728	230,636,339

Internal Committee Report



Seniors Programming Update

Community Development and Recreation Department

SUMMARY

Each year, the Community Development and Recreation Department provides programming for seniors across the Municipality. Funding for seniors' socials for 2024 will be distributed in January, in time for organizations to host events during the winter months, a time when seniors may experience social isolation. The Department is looking for ways to support seniors with remaining grant funding. The Municipality is also seeking to receive another provincial grant in order to further support seniors programming in the future.

BACKGROUND

Each year, the Community Development and Recreation Department provides funding to non-profit organizations in order to host social events for seniors across the Municipality. Senior Socials are hosted in 8 communities in St. Mary's, each one being tailored to their communities needs and requests. This year, funding from the Municipality will once again be sent to organizations to host these events. Socials commonly feature food, either a full lunch or tea, coffee and snacks. Socials are designed with seniors in mind, but are open to all to attend, this helps seniors make new connections and creates opportunities for inter-generational programming. Seniors play games of their choosing, socialize while working on an individual projects and learn from a guest speaker on a topic of their interest. For the most part, socials take place over the winter months in order to help prevent social isolation. Organizations are asked to host at least three free events, but many host more, depending on their capacity.

In 2022, the Municipality received two grants for seniors' projects. One of these grants was an Age Friendly Communities Grant through the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors, which was used to increase the amount of senior social events held throughout St. Mary's and provide additional resources for socials. The Municipality was able to purchase additional equipment for organizations to utilize for senior socials. Each community put forward their requests, based on their needs and wishes of seniors in their community. For some organizations, we purchased new games such as crokinole boards, board & card games and puzzles, other organizations required equipment such as new tables, a television, or better lighting for outside to improve safety for seniors. The remaining funds for this grant will be evenly distributed with seniors social funding this year.

The second grant received was a New Horizons for Seniors Grant to support a seniors technology program. The program was held last year and provided the opportunity for seniors to utilize different forms of technology with the aid of a skilled staff person to provide assistance and teaching. The program was well received, but seniors would bring their own pieces of technology to learn more about from staff.

Internal Committee Report



Equipment purchased through the program will continue to be made available to seniors to utilize. Any remaining funds must be used to support seniors in St. Mary's. Staff are looking to spend these funds by the end of the fiscal year. One way in which these remaining funds are being utilized is through a collaboration with Eastern Counties Regional Library to host senior focused events at the Sherbrooke Library. A new table and chairs for the library community room will also be purchased in order to make the space more accessible for seniors and community programming.

FYI: New project Group: Funding TBA. A new application through the Age Friendly Communities Grant has been submitted to host a series of educational and experienced based programming for seniors throughout St. Mary's. If approved, these funds will enable organizations to host presentations on important issues to seniors, such fraud and elder abuse awareness, end of life planning and nutrition. In addition to informational sessions, hands on learning opportunities would be organized, such as gardening, painting and more. These sessions would utilize expertise from organizations throughout St. Mary's. All equipment needed for these sessions would be provided free of charge for seniors. A decision regarding this grant opportunity is expected in the spring or summer. The new grant includes: painting classes, gardening classes for healthy eating (vegetables) and varied free third party seminars tba e.g. safety and emergency preparedness.

CONSIDERATIONS

Staff would like to collect ideas from councillors for how to utilize the remaining seniors funding by the end of the fiscal. If any councillors have any specific ideas or requests from constituents or organizations, please send them along to Community Development and Recreation staff for consideration.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

Tyler MacLaughlin, Active Living Coordinator

SUMMARY

Some disabilities, conditions or chronic illnesses are not immediately obvious to others. For some people, this can make it hard to understand and believe that someone, with a "non-visible" condition genuinely needs support. Some people question whether you have a disability because you don't look 'like you have a disability'.

That is why we created the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower - to encourage inclusivity, acceptance and understanding.

It is a simple tool for you to share that you have a hidden disability voluntarily. Simply by wearing the Sunflower, you're just letting everyone know that you might need extra help, understanding, or just more time.

-Taken from hdsunflower.com

BACKGROUND

Currently in Canada, there are only 13 organizations that are members and registered on the online map. 1 in Quebec, 7 in Ontario, 1 in Manitoba, and 4 in Alberta. This could not only raise awareness for hidden disabilities, but potentially lead to more businesses/organizations in Nova and surrounding Atlantic provinces to join as well.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Standard Plan – \$550 annually
 - a. Includes:
 - i. Full Sunflower training
 - ii. Sunflower location map
 - iii. 5% discount on products
2. Professional Plan – \$1400 annually
 - a. Includes:
 - i. Full Sunflower training
 - ii. Webinars
 - iii. Sunflower location map

- iv. Invisible disabilities index
- v. 10% discount on products

Products

1. Products include:
 - a. Wristbands
 - b. Lanyards
 - c. Ribbons
 - d. ID cards
 - e. Badges
 - f. Decals
 2. Business Starter Pack (\$205.80) includes:
 - a. 15 85cm standard Sunflower lanyards
 - b. 15 Sunflower ID cards and badge holders
 - c. 10 Sunflower pin badges
 - d. 10 Sunflower ribbon pins
 - e. 10 Sunflower adult silicone wristbands
 - f. 10 Sunflower fabric wristbands
 - g. 5 "Can I help you?" badges
 - h. 2 A3 generic posters
 - i. 1 Decal
 - j. 2 Circular car stickers
- Additional costs
 - Replacement costs for identification products
 - Wristbands and chest ribbon pack = \$8.14
 - Standard lanyard = \$3.50
 - Car stickers = \$9.00
 - **Proposed Municipal Program:**
 - Post signage at Office reception
 - Office window at Recplex
 - Offer pins to the public at the office
 - All staff to be trained on how to support an individual
 - Members of public would self declare by wearing a pin or other municipal provided décor. People could also state they are a sunflower customer.
 - The Municipality would not keep a list of sunflower customers/ residents for privacy reasons.

Staff Report



- Staff could also be given décor to show support
- Note: This is completely voluntary, and is not meant to label individuals, but simply to let others know that you may need additional support, help, or time. There are also products to show that you support the initiative, even if you do not have a hidden disability yourself.
- Launch: With a press release.
- Challenges: we offer diverse services. It is easier for a business with a limited number of inquiries to plan and tailor messages and support. It will be an experiment to try this in a broad government service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above considerations, staff are recommending that:

Council approves that the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's become a member of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program under the Standard Membership Plan and decide on 1-2 wearable products to purchase for members of the public and staff (in support).

Internal Committee Report



Truth and Reconciliation – Training Opportunity

Community Development and Recreation Department

SUMMARY

Funding has been approved for the Municipality through the Province of Nova Scotia's Capacity Fund/Cultural Communities and Identities Fund to host a Kairos Blanket Exercise for the Municipality. This training session must take place in January of 2024. Staff are looking for available dates and participants in order to schedule this event.

BACKGROUND

Community Development and Recreation staff had previously submitted a grant application through the Province of Nova Scotia's Diversity and Community Capacity Fund/Cultural Communities and Identities Fund. The grant requested funding to host a Kairos Blanket Exercise for the Municipality. This training opportunity would assist the Municipality in responding to action 57 from the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action report. Action 57 reads: "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism." Staff were sent approval of this application in November 2023.

The Kairos Blanket Exercise is an educational workshop. It is described on the organization's website as "an interactive and experiential teaching tool that explores the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the land we now know as Canada." The workshop is 2-3 hours in length and includes blankets to represent the land and participants step into the role of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples by reading scrolls and responding to cues in the exercises script. The workshop is guided by a facilitator and Indigenous Elder and Knowledge keeper who use a script to tell the history from pre-contact, treaty making, colonization and more. The workshop also includes a debriefing, done in the form of a talking circle.

Staff have contacted Restorative Approach, a Nova Scotia company who are permitted to facilitate the Kairos Blanket Exercise in collaboration with an elder. This organization has availability to offer the workshop in January.

Internal Committee Report



ACTION

Staff are looking for dates and times that council is available to participate in a Kairos Blanket Exercise in January. At least two dates should be confirmed, in case one is unavailable. The number of participants that are needed to offer this workshop is 15, additional participants will have to be identified in order to host the training.

Once participants and a date have been determined, staff can book the session, confirm participants and make preparations to host an elder.

Topic: 2-1-1 Day

Municipal Council Supports February 11th 2024 as 2-1-1 Day

SUMMARY

211 Nova Scotia is a non-profit, funded through the Government of Nova Scotia and United Ways, that offers a free and confidential service that connects people in Nova Scotia to the community and social programs and resources they need. Through information and referrals, 211 helps connect residents to local community groups, non-profit, and government organizations. This can include information about mental health support, access to food, financial aid, employment resources, and more.

211 Nova Scotia is accessible by phone by calling 2-1-1, 24 hours every day of the year in over 240 languages. 211 is also available through email, text messaging, web-based chat, and Virtual Relay Service for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

In 2023, 211 has received over 79,000 contacts from people in Nova Scotia looking for information and referrals. This represents a 13% increase in contacts from 2022. The top categories of needs identified in 2022 included basic needs, mental health and substance abuse disorders, community services, and health care.

On February 11th, 211 will once again join our national partners in celebrating 211 Day to raise awareness of the 211 service in Nova Scotia and throughout Canada. One of the ways that 211 marks the occasion is to illuminate different buildings and landmarks. Last year, Halifax City Hall, Sydney City Hall, the Nova Scotia Legislature, and the Sydney Port Authority Big Fiddle were all illuminated red on February 11th to celebrate the occasion.

In most cases, contacting 211 Nova Scotia is completely confidential, but we often ask for a postal code from an individual to ensure that they are providing resources that serve the person's community. At first glance, they could see that they had a lower-than-average number of calls, texts, emails, and chats from Guysborough County residents. 211 is also able to see that they have over 1,200 programs that serve Guysborough County that they are able to refer to.

It is 211's goal to increase awareness of 211 Nova Scotia's services in the Municipality and throughout Guysborough County.

BACKGROUND

211 Nova Scotia is a non-profit, funded through the Government of Nova Scotia and United Ways, that offers a free and confidential service that connects people in Nova Scotia to the community and social programs and resources they need. Through information and referrals,

they help connect residents to local community groups, non-profit, and government organizations. This can include information about mental health support, access to food, financial aid, employment resources, and more.

Some of the resources that are available to residents in your district that people may not be familiar with are:

1. Men's, Women's, and All Gender's Helplines - A free, confidential service for adults who have concerns about their well-being, safety, and/or the safety of others. The Helplines offer a brief solution-finding session with a trained counsellor who answers the phone. The session is designed to help someone cope with a difficult situation, talk through their feelings, or build relationship skills. It is not a crisis service, and it is expected that one call should give an individual the support they need for the day. The helplines are available 24/7 by calling 2-1-1 and requesting to be connected.
2. Seniors Care Grant - The Seniors Care Grant is an annual grant program that helps seniors with a low income with the cost of household services, healthcare services and home heating. Grants are up to \$750 for each household. To qualify for the Seniors Care Grant, you need to be 65 or older by March 31, 2024, and meet all eligibility criteria including having a household net income of \$37,500 or less.
3. Heating Assistance Rebate Program - Helps low and modest income Nova Scotians with the cost of home heating. Offers a rebate of \$600 for eligible applicants who heat their home with oil, electricity, wood, propane, wood pellets, natural gas or coal.
 - a. Eligibility for single households: have a net 2022 income of \$55,000 or less.
 - b. Eligibility for families: have a net 2022 income of \$75,000 or less

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Cost:
Municipal Office will have to purchase lights to illuminate significant buildings and landmarks.
2. Municipal Office:
Light the Municipal office in support for 211 Day and the resources they offer.
3. Library:
Light the Library in support of 211 Day and the resources they offer
4. Municipal Council Considerations:
Listen to Council's ideas of what buildings, organizations, or places they would like to advertise 211 Day. (ex. Community Centres, flag poles, landmarks, buildings, etc.)

Staff Report



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Municipal Council supports illuminating significant buildings and landmarks red on and/or leading up to February 11th, 2024, and incorporating some 211 Day posts into your social media accounts and district messaging.

Survey Required

Economic Development

SUMMARY

A request for Proposal should be created to request the services of a Land Surveyor with the intention of defining the area(s) available for current and proposed uses.

BACKGROUND

In June 2023, Council approved and adopted the Land Development Committee's What We Heard and Final Recommendations Report. Under the Housing priority Recommendation 4. Stated:
Recommend Council reserve PID # 37501095 Sherbrooke for a potential housing project.

Council approved the following recommendation on January 8, 2024:

That Council request staff to investigate and bring back to Council the best business practice options for the creation of a neighbourhood concept based on wellness, that could include a long-term care facility and a hospital and other things and facilities.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considering that multiple parties will be reviewing the potential of PID# 37501095 from housing & healthcare perspectives and in order to protect the existing Stonewall Park trail system, a survey of the parcel along with delineation of Stonewall Park would be prudent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council recommend Staff create Request For Proposal for Land Survey and park delineation services.