



NEWS RELEASE – Lamont County Council Approves its 2025 Budget

December 12, 2024 – LAMONT, AB: On December 10, 2024, Lamont County Council approved the 2025 Budget and Long Term Operating and Capital Plans. Council took a priority-based and collaborative approach, with a target of improving long-term sustainability. Results from the annual Service Level and Budget Survey and resident feedback throughout the year informed Council and guided approval of the budget.

Council works hard to provide a transparent and open process to setting its budget. Budget Meetings where Council debated and deliberated the budget were held on November 14, 15 and 26 and were open to the public.

The 2025 budget includes the following service enhancements for the 2025 year:

1. Dust Abatement on County Haul Roads;
2. Enhancements to the Shoulder Pull Program;
3. Increased contribution to STARS to assist with public safety and emergency response;
4. Increased Communications support with a focus on public engagement and third-party Public Engagement Survey to garner public feedback;
5. Continued commitment to Library Board annual contribution to ensure education and accessibility of information and resources to Lamont County residents;
6. Position adjustments for Public Works , Agricultural Services and FCSS to meet updated requirements;
7. Updating Records Management to a digital system; and
8. A measured reduction to media advertising.

Two Fees- and assessment-related updates include:

9. Adjustment to the Farm and Residential Tax Rate by four per cent (this is a proposed increase for budgeting purposes; discussion and final approval of the *Tax Bylaw* occurs in early 2025);
10. A Water Utility Rate increase of 20 per cent (to directly offset increased costs from the water commission).

The requirement to draw from tax stabilization reserves remains along with funding for capital projects from capital reserves. The budget includes a carry-forward of planned capital projects from 2024 that were previously approved but required multiple years to complete.

Lamont County Council spent a significant time reviewing the 2025 operating and capital budget to ensure the budget focuses on delivering on Council’s strategic plan, while maintaining current service levels to residents.

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"Council has done its due diligence to complete a responsible budget," said Lamont County Reeve David Diduck. "We have worked to maintain service levels with a few additions, while remaining fiscally prudent. There are increases in many of the day-to-day needs for everyone and we have balanced the need for service efficiencies with our budget, limiting the impact to residents to keep things affordable wherever possible."

The residential and farm increase has been notionally set at four per cent which will be confirmed when the *Tax Bylaw* is finalized in the new year. Lamont County's increase and tax rate are lower than most surrounding municipalities across our region. Council is committed to limiting the cost-of-living impacts wherever. Without a minor increase, the services provided to residents would not be sustainable.

BUDGET SUMMARY:

The 2025 Budget and Multi-year Operating and Capital Plan, as presented, has 2025 Operating expenditures of \$29,427,789 and Capital project carry forward expenditures of \$2,756,875. Capital expenditures are also funded, in part, by trade-in of assets, Provincial grants, and reserves. Operating expenditures are funded through the tax levy, user fees, and reserves.

Further reporting on budget and service levels is published in the **Service Level and Operational Highlights 2025 Budget** report (planned for release in 2025) and the Budget Summary Report (planned for release in early 2025).

The Reeve also publishes his annual Year in Review and video message in early 2025.

The public and media are invited to attend council and committee meetings (including Agricultural Service Board, Municipal Planning Commission and Intermunicipal Subdivision Development & Appeal Board, etc.) in Council Chambers or virtually through Zoom (link available on the Lamont County website).

Be advised that all meetings are recorded.

Next Council Meeting: January 14, 2025.

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