

2017 Interim Budget

County Council Approves Challenging 2017 Interim Budget

Beaver County Council has approved the 2017 Interim Operating and Capital Budget. The interim budget includes approximately \$20,869,932 of capital and operating expenditures. Mainly due to the loss of property assessment of oil and gas properties, all residential, farmland and other non-residential properties will experience a mill rate increase of about 2% in 2017. The impact of the mill rate increase on individual property taxes will vary by property and the change in assessment of each property from 2016.

“This was an extremely difficult budget year due to economic forces beyond our control,” stated Reeve Kevin Smook. “The downturn in oil and gas prices has affected our tax assessment base with a net drop of over \$14 million in non-residential assessment. While we reduced our overall spending from 2016 to 2017 by \$1,234,093, many properties will likely still see a tax increase due to the impact of the reduced values of these oil and gas properties. Some properties may have had assessment value changes which also affects their tax levy. With these impacts in mind, Council had to make strategic reductions to our budget, while essentially leaving many services unaffected.”

Capital Budget Highlights Include the following projects:

- Upgrade of Township Road 492 between Secondary Highway 834 and Range Road 181 (Terracem Base Upgrade and Chip Seal Surface Treatment).
- Township Road 480 from Highway 36 to Range Road 130 (Terracem Base Upgrade and Chip Seal Surface Treatment).
- Township Road 514 from SH 630 to Range Road 193 (Chip Seal Surface Treatment) subject to confirmation that the previous year’s road base treatment has been successful.
- Range Road 203 from Township Road 510 to Township Road 504 (Terracem and Chip Seal), to address an oiled road with substandard road base.
- Re-Oiling 6 miles of Road (locations to be determined based on spring road conditions).
- Intersection Construction of Range Road 154 at Highway 14, subject to confirmation of cost sharing with Alberta Transportation.
- Thirty miles of Road Rehabilitation (Shoulder Pulls) to re-establish a crown to gravel road surfaces and provide compaction to substandard road grade.
- Upgrades at County Campgrounds including a new boat launch at Camp Lake Park.

Operating Budget Highlights:

- Road gravel program of approximately +/- 900 km (560 miles) of rural roads.
- Continued support of all Shared Service Funding for Recreation and Libraries with our urban neighbours, Agricultural Societies and Library Boards.
- Increase in operating budget to Beaver Emergency Services Commission for fire and emergency planning services.
- Return to previous road mowing practice of beginning mowing in June rather than July, which should address mowing problems experienced in 2016.
- Roadside weed spraying of approximately 1/3 of the County roadway system with additional spot spraying in problem areas.
- Continued funding of Beaver County seed cleaning cooperative.
- 350 spot dust control applications and approximately 35 km of collector road dust control (calcium chloride) application.
- Continued planning and development of the Equity Industrial Park.
- Energy Audits for 3 County facilities.
- Completion of Municipal Sustainability Plan to refresh the long-term vision of Beaver County and region.
- 2017 General Municipal Election.

“This was the most difficult budget of this Council term“ noted Reeve Smook. “We needed to cut costs in many areas while minimizing the impact on our residents and businesses. We know our residents are affected by the economic downturn so now is the time to show some restraint. Council feels we achieved the right balance with this budget.”

The budget will be finalized in the spring of 2017 once the Provincial budget is adopted and final property assessment figures are established.

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