



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 22, 2015**

The Town of Wasaga Beach's 2016 budget was passed at the December 22, 2015 Council meeting.

The total proposed budget is \$49.8 million - \$34.3 million in operating expenses and \$15.5 million in capital expenses. This compares to an overall budget of \$47.2 million in 2015.

The municipal tax rate increase for 2016 is 1.5%, and will raise an additional \$288,000. An average residential home with a current value assessment of \$280,000 will see an increase in the municipal portion of their taxes of \$70.28 or \$5.86 per month. Of that, \$49.57 is due to the increase in property value over 2015 and \$20.71 is for the 1.5% tax rate increase.

In preparing the budget, Council and staff have taken into consideration funding programs and services that are priorities of Council and beneficial to residents, while limiting the financial impact to taxpayers.

The 2016 capital program continues Council's goal of addressing the Town's infrastructure needs including:

- \$4.5 million to fund sewer and water installation (Phase 2) of the Bay Colony area subdivision
- \$3.4 million for urbanization and widening of River Road West from Brillinger Drive to Veterans Way dependent upon receipt of a financial grant to assist with the project
- \$625,000 to fund urbanization of 39th Street South (Phase 1) including: storm sewer, curb and gutter and sidewalks from Mosley Street to south of Worsley Elementary School. \$450,000 of this project will be funded through a Federal Gas Tax grant
- \$490,000 to fund Golf Course Road sanitary servicing between Longdale Road and Bells Park Drive
- \$95,000 to fund an expansion of the parking lot at the RecPlex
- \$58,300 to fund improvements to the Lamont Creek Tennis/Pickleball Courts
- \$25,000 to fund a renovation of the Fernbrook Centre washrooms and the installation of shade structures to cover the existing rear patio

There are also a number of initiatives related to Council's renewed focus on Economic Development. Funds have been included to update policies that will facilitate the establishment the downtown core focused on Main Street and to develop a weekly summer market (Main Street Market) including a variety of entertainment, located along the former Pedestrian Mall at Beach Area One. In addition, \$131,000 has been included to address repairs to the recently acquired buildings at Beach Area One. Finally, the Special Events budget has been increased by \$127,300 to support new events.

Mayor Brian Smith commented that, "The 2016 budget maintains current service levels and focuses enhancements in areas related to economic development with the goal of building the tax base through economic growth. The 1.5% tax rate increase allows Council to invest in the future so that funds are available when major capital projects, such as the new multi-purpose recreation centre are undertaken. I am very proud of Council having considered two budgets in the same year (Council approved the 2015 budget in February, 2015) and implementing a number of the priorities it set for this term of Council."

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For media requiring additional information, please contact:

Monica Quinlan
Treasurer
Town of Wasaga Beach
(705) 429-3844 ext. 2244
treasurer@wasagabeach.com

OR

Mayor Brian Smith
Town of Wasaga Beach
(705) 429-3844, ext. 2225
mayor@wasagabeach.com

OR

Jenny Legget
Communications and
Special Project Coordinator
Town of Wasaga Beach
(705) 429-3844 ext. 2285
j.legget@wasagabeach.com