

### **2011 Budget Highlights**

Tonight Council will pass the by-law approving this year's tax rate. Once again the process has been completed with a conscious effort in maintaining a fair and equitable rate. The municipal tax rate as approved represents a **one percent (1%) decrease** from last year's rate. It appears that South Stormont has retained the lowest residential tax rate for the region. We will verify this statement when all of the area rates throughout SDG are confirmed.

Although the municipal rate decreased, an average South Stormont taxpayer will experience an increase, for example: with an average assessment of \$154,500 there is an overall increase of ninety (\$90) dollars as compared to 2010. The reason for this increase is due to the combination of the province-wide assessment increase, the upper tier tax rate increase and the education tax rate.

For property taxes collected by South Stormont, for every one (1) dollar the following occurs: SDG Counties receives fifty-one (51) cents, the school boards (education) receive eighteen (18) cents and we retain thirty-one (31) cents for our own purposes.

The total budget for 2011 is \$16.5 M. The expenditure percentages by department include: Transportation 23%, Water and Wastewater Services 19%, Parks and

Recreation, and Building and Development both at 8%, Fire and Rescue, and Waste Management each at 5%, with General at 12%. The Capital Building Infrastructure, unique to 2011 is 20%.

In addition to on-going operations and maintenance budget items, some of the details for this year's budget include:

- Continued donations support as committed to the Winchester District Memorial Hospital and other significant organizations; Council will receive an update from the Cornwall Community Hospital;
- Technology upgrades and improvements including Wi-Fi at the new municipal office;
- Emergency Management preparedness such as annual training and exercise; the Emergency Plan has been updated, and the creation of a Resource Directory, County wide is underway.
- Support is provided through the annual budget for necessary departmental training and equipment;
- With the financial assistance of the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP), South Stormont Fire Services will experience communications upgrades along with a professional dispatch service.
- A strategic plan was proposed for the four (4) Fire Stations regarding building infrastructure and renovations, with Newington (Station 3) receiving approval for this year.

- Annual Fire and Rescue purchases included health and safety items such as bunker gear, SCBAs and other necessary equipment.
- Departmental fleet enhancements include a pick-up truck and plow truck for Public Works and the continuation of reserves. 2010 realized the purchase of a new water tanker for Fire and Rescue Station #3 (Newington) and a new Plow Truck for Transportation Services.
- A new salt shed is scheduled to be built at the Public Works Garage located on Post Road.
- Federal Gas Tax funds will assist with the reconstruction of Spruce Street. Other capital road construction projects for this year include the resurfacing of Cameron, Sandtown, and Eligh Beckstead Roads; gravel upgrades to Groves, Richmond, McGillis and Willy Allan Roads; and Moulinette Island and Race Track Bridge with guiderail replacement/upgrades along with other maintenance items including a \$20,000 increase for grading roads.
- To improve gravel roads, Council also concurred with a 3-year cycle (versus 4 to 5 year cycle) for the gravel resurfacing /loose top patching. This budget item represents an additional expense of \$80,000.
- A Technical Road Review has been completed and an updated Road Management Plan is in progress. This Report will assist Council and staff in formulating the most cost-effective long term maintenance and construction strategy within annual budget limitations, and as importantly, provide the year-to-year work plan.

- Building and Development will continue with required dollars for promotions and advertising, municipal signage program, drainage maintenance including beaver control, technology upgrades and by-law enforcement issues.
- The long awaited Comprehensive Zoning By-law will go public this spring. Work scheduled includes the Community Improvement Plan, SDG County Settlement Areas and other pertinent planning matters. There are several other land development proposals, all of which require planning and financing prior to moving forward.
- Parks and Recreation will become involved with the development of the new park in Westview Acres, along with resting spots along bike path and benches, bike path and neighbourhood parks signage, accessible Arnold Bethune Park washrooms and the 2010 carry over for tennis court retrofits. The Feasibility Study projects as outlined will continue as finances allow.
- The Seniors Support Center in Ingleside requires additional lot grading work. The Friendly Circle Seniors group will be housed in current township facilities as the building at 50 Saunders has outlived its useful life span.
- Environmental programs and other landfill regulatory requirements are being reviewed in preparation of meeting Provincial demands.
- Landscape improvements including the clearing of vistas for water view opportunities are budgeted. Waterfront partnerships and issues such as long term municipal use for Farran Park continue.
- Water and sewer rates for 2011 will experience the cost of living increase, that being 2.4%. A review of future capital levies is underway.

- Building infrastructure projects completed in 2010 include the Ingleside Library, Arena repairs and renovations, the OPP building and the new Town Hall; rental monies to be placed in reserves for future requirements will be confirmed.
- Other projects planned for 2011 include a Waste Management Strategy Plan; our diversion rate needs to improve. Also, there will be a review and evaluation regarding water loss detection program.
- Additional revenue sources such as advertising, the sale of surplus properties, etc. continue.
- South Stormont residents are reminded of the completion of the Superior Tanker Shuttle Program. This accreditation will provide direct savings for insurance premiums to individual home owners; contact the municipal office for details or visit the Township website.

We look forward to another successful year, and encourage South Stormont ratepayers to keep in touch...let us know how we are doing.

On behalf of South Stormont Council and staff, we will strive to review and recommend better ways to deliver services while we maintain a fair tax rate; efficiencies and effectiveness are priority.

Thank you.