



WARDEN'S 2019 – 2020 BUDGET ADDRESS
March 25, 2019



Municipality of the District of Shelburne
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Monday, March 25, 2019

On behalf of Council, I am pleased to provide our community with the continued plans and priorities that the 52nd Council of Municipality of the District of Shelburne will undertake in the 2019-20 fiscal year, as we begin the third year of our four-year mandate.

Our first budget in 2017-2018 set the foundation and groundwork for the investments that our Council believed we needed to make in our term and the successive budgets have continued to advance our goals and priorities, to ensure growth and development in our community through prudent investments in our programs, services and infrastructure.

Health Care

First, quality health care has been and continues to remain a top priority for Council into the upcoming fiscal year.

A. Roseway Hospital

We are seeking answers to questions regarding the future of Roseway Hospital and its services.

At our Council meeting held in March 2019, we asked whether there were any plans for the closure of Roseway Hospital and Janet Knox, CEO of NSHA stated that there are no plans to close it while referring to the site as “a pivotal resource” and a “key” location geographically for ER services in the province.

B. New Shelburne Primary Health Clinic

At long last, the new \$3-million Shelburne primary health clinic officially opened on February 12th and is already having an impact on health care services in our region.

We are pleased to report that the NSHA has advised that beginning at the end of April 2019, there will be a primary care clinic for residents of Shelburne County who do not currently have a family doctor or nurse practitioner. On Fridays, the clinic will have same-day appointments where patients will first see a licensed practical nurse, followed by a nurse practitioner or family doctor. This is an interim measure to help provide residents access to primary care.

Anyone who does not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner and wants to be considered for the Shelburne family practice, needs to be on the Need a Family Practice provincial registry.

To register with the Need a Family Practice provincial registry, call 811 or visit:

<https://needafamilypractice.nshealth.ca>.

C. Recruitment

The Municipality continues to be actively engaged in a variety of recruitment efforts with a number of partners, with the goal of securing the services of local health care professionals.

We will continue to partner with the Roseway Hospital Foundation to fund 'return of service' contracts with Doctors, offering a financial incentive to extend their contracts and remain in the local area, and by offering other health care professionals 'incentives' or 'signing bonuses' that can be included in the offers of employment.

We are collaborating with the District of Barrington in its efforts to secure the services of a family doctor. The Municipality has agreed to provide the Doctor with funding which will permit them to take Emergency Department Courses (which have been recommended by Doctors at Roseway Hospital) and, in return, the Doctor has agreed to serve one (1) twelve (12) hour shift per week for a period of one (1) year in the Roseway Hospital Emergency Department.

D. Emergency Department

We partner with the District of Barrington and the Roseway Hospital Charitable Foundation to annually provide locum funding which provides Emergency Department Doctors from outside the area with temporary housing, while they are working in the Roseway ED.

Roseway Hospital is in need of a new x-ray machine and the Municipality will partner with the Roseway Hospital Charitable Foundation to raise funds for the purchase of this necessary equipment.

E. Advocacy

We have encouraged the NSHA to host Community Stakeholder Engagement Session and the NSHA has confirmed that Shelburne County will be the first location for its upcoming stakeholder

sessions. This will be an opportunity to have a full, frank discussion about the health care challenges that we face as a rural community in NS and potential local solutions that could be implemented to improve our health care services.

We have also identified a gap in the *Hospital Act* which, oddly, permits a nurse practitioner to discharge patients from a hospital but does not allow them to admit patients to the hospital.

As Emergency Departments continue to experience frequent closures all over the Province due to “physician unavailability”, nurse practitioners continue to be underutilized in this province. There is no reason why NPs in NS cannot serve the same function that they perform in other provinces and territories, which includes admitting and discharging patients.

We are partnering with the Nurse Practitioner Association of NS to move this initiative forward and we will be seeking the support of other municipalities as we engage the NSHA and the Province to implement this necessary change.

Rural Internet

Secondly, we are fully aware of the impact that the lack of this essential service has on residents and businesses and we have partnered with Bell Aliant on a comprehensive Fiber to the Home (FTTH) Broadband Project. The Project is aimed at providing high-speed internet service to at least 95% of our rural household.

The total cost of the Project is \$5,255,144, with Bell Aliant contributing \$2,095,986 leaving a balance of \$3,159,158, which will be funded through a variety of sources, including the Municipality, the Investing in Canada Plan, and the Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust.

Although the deployment of the Broadband Internet Project continues to wait on provincial and federal funding, the Municipality has increased its commitment to \$1,139,780 and we continue to advocate for the removal of the ‘red tape’ so we can move with the deployment as quickly as possible.

Shelburne County Marine Centre of Excellence

Third, we continue to move forward with the development of the Shelburne County Marine Centre of Excellence.

The proposed Marine Centre of Excellence will be an integral component in helping Nova Scotia become Canada’s lead on marine research, technology, and related products, services, and businesses and it will work with all levels of government, marine industries and stakeholders, non-profit organizations with a focus on community development and the ocean sector, to advance the long-term sustainability of the fisheries and marine sectors.

The establishment of Shelburne County Marine Centre of Excellence is strongly supported by our partners at Dalhousie University and NSCC Shelburne Campus and we have significant expressions of interest from Development Nova Scotia, COVE, and Ignite Labs. We have also had very encouraging meetings with representatives from ACOA and the Atlantic Fisheries Fund and we will continue to move this matter forward.

New Municipal Complex

Fourth, we continue to move forward with our plans for a new, modern municipal building. Our goal is to create a tri-government complex where our residents can access municipal, provincial and federal services. We are working with the federal government to secure space in our new building for Employment Services Development Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. We are also working with the provincial government for the relocation of the Court House and Registry of Motor Vehicles to the new complex.

We will continue to work with the architect on the conceptual design of the building and the initial estimates for the capital cost are approximately \$11 million, with up to two-thirds of the complex being occupied by rent paying tenants.

Other Noteworthy Items

Regional Cooperation

The Province has amended the Municipal Government Act to require municipal units to adopt a comprehensive Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw including zoning maps covering all of the municipality. While this means that we will be undertaking a comprehensive revision of our municipal planning strategy and land use bylaw, we also see an opportunity for regional cooperation.

The Municipality is in discussions with the Town of Shelburne and the Town of Lockeport with respect to the possibility of a regional municipal planning strategy and complimentary land use bylaws so that our residents can receive the benefit of regional planning (as opposed to municipal planning).

In today's modern, digital environment, a GIS technician is a valuable but expensive resource. The Municipality has partnered with the Town of Shelburne and the Town of Lockeport with respect to the hiring of a GIS Technician (Geo-Information Specialist) who will assist the municipalities with the creation of zoning maps as well as asset mapping, etc.

The Municipality has also partnered with the District of Barrington in the development of a mobile tourism website / app. The "Show Me App" has been designed by Digital Fusion (Bridgewater) and we anticipate that it will be live later this Spring.

We are also pleased to announce that the Town of Shelburne is coming on-board with the Show Me App, making it a regional initiative. The Show Me App will be supported by kiosks located in the VICs in Barrington and Shelburne and at the Beach Centre in Lockeport.

Emergency Services

We have been working with the Town of Shelburne on a Fire Services Agreement for the provision of fire protection services by the Shelburne Fire Department. The Town and the Municipality will be cost sharing on the operating and capital expenses of the department.

We addressed the issue of fire protection services for our residents impacted by the closure of the Port Clyde Fire Department. In reviewing the issue, it was determined that the best solution for our residents was to have the area serviced by the Shelburne Fire Department. The fire service area for the Shelburne Fire Department has been expanded to include that portion of the Municipality that was formerly serviced by the Clyde River Fire Department and the Fire Department Boundary has been changed in the 911 system.

Our funding to the fire departments located in the municipality has remained unchanged (\$230,000 in operating funds and \$37,500 in capital assistance) and we have also included funds in this year's budget to provide Workers' Compensation coverage for our volunteer firefighters so that full and comprehensive wage replacement protection is in place, should one of our volunteer fire fighters be injured while on duty.

Administration / Staffing

The Municipality continues to attract highly qualified staff, which increases our ability to serve the needs of our residents.

In July 2018, we hired our new CAO.

In August, we filled the newly created position of in-house accountant.

In the fall of 2018, we better defined the executive assistant positions to include a corporate stream and an administrative stream and, in March 2019, we hired a new executive assistant for the administrative stream.

In March, we also welcomed Scott Dillman to our team as term Recreation Coordinator.

Education on Public Issues

Council has also taken significant steps to be educated on issues that are relevant to members of our communities.

For example, on the issue of offshore exploration and development, we have had presentations from the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) as well as Campaign to Protect Offshore Nova Scotia (C-PONS).

On the equally important issue of forestry, Mr. Bill Lahey, President and Vice-Chancellor of University of King's College presented on his "Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia" and we also had a presentation from Marcus Zwicker, General Manager – Westfor Management Inc.

Advocacy for Local Issues

An issue with respect to the EI Program was brought to Council's attention by a large local employer. It was explained that, in the Western Region of NS, the EI Program has set the number of insured hours required to qualify for regular EI benefits at 665. They expressed their concerns regarding the company's inability to provide its seasonal workers with the necessary hours to qualify for EI benefits and its ability to retain its experienced and skilled seasonable workforce, if EI benefits are not available.

In response, the Municipality wrote to the Minister and requested that the federal government examine the EI system, with a view to treating similar areas of NS the same with respect to the EI benefits and with particular emphasis on the important role that seasonal workers play in the sustainability and growth of the economy of rural-NS and rural-Canada.

Tax Exemption – Community Organizations & Low Income

No community can be locally strong and encouraging without the volunteer efforts of our many citizens who volunteer with dozens of community organizations from arts and culture, to sports and recreation, service clubs, and various other organizations. Our community is much richer and diverse because of the efforts of these groups and their volunteers. To support their continuing efforts, I am pleased to acknowledge that this budget includes **\$102,939** in property

tax exemptions to these organizations. This is a small way that our municipality continues to support our volunteers and to recognize the significant time and effort put forth by these groups.

We know that some of our residents face challenges in paying their property taxes. Last year, Council increased the low-income tax exemption up to \$400 for those with household incomes of less than \$20,000. The program was also amended so that those with total household incomes between \$20,000 and \$22,500 were eligible for a tax exemption of up to \$200 and those with total household incomes of between \$22,500 and \$25,000, an exemption up to \$100.

The low-income tax exemption program has assisted **72 residents with a budgeted amount of \$20, 673**. As we know, these are some of the most generous tax exemptions in Nova Scotia and we are proud to continue to support our low-income residents in this way.

Welkum Park

In the fall of 2018, the Province announced that new accessibility standards for shared public spaces would be released in 2022. The Municipality understands the importance of accessibility to the overall well-being of our residents and is committed to improving access. As one of our first steps towards increasing accessibility, we have included funding in the budget to hire a consultant to conduct a full accessibility review of Welkum Park, with recommendations on how we can make the park fully accessible for everyone to enjoy.

Now on to the 2019-20 budget. Today's budget is set at \$8,200,212 with approximately \$1.14 million designated for Rural Broadband Internet.

Council will maintain the current residential and resource tax rate of \$1.26 per \$100 of assessment and current commercial tax rate of \$1.82 per \$100 of assessment. One cent of residential and resource generates \$37,439; one cent commercial generates \$3,220.

Council will continue to appropriately fund reserves with \$315,510 being budgeted for the capital reserve and \$200,000 for the operating reserve.

At the end of fiscal 2019-20, the Municipality's total reserves will be approximately \$4,992,038, once all projects are completed for the year.

FCI

As we know, the Province of Nova Scotia provides an assessment of the financial health of all municipalities across Nova Scotia through a financial condition index (FCI).

In 2015-2016, we received 6 green scores which mean we exceed the benchmark set by the province and also exceed the average of all 21 rural municipalities in Nova Scotia, 5 yellow where we exceeded the provincial target, but were below the rural average, and 4 reds where we failed to meet the provincial standard.

Municipal staff worked diligently to improve our financial efficiencies and, as evidence by the 2016-2017 data, their efforts paid off with the Municipality getting 11 green indicators, one yellow and one red indicator.

I am very pleased to report that we have continued to see improvement in our FCI results earning green scores in 12 of the 13 indicators and red in 1 indicator. The lone red score is for '5 Year Budget Accuracy' and, to explain this red score which represented a budget surplus, we have opted to provide the following comments for inclusion in our Municipal FCI and Profile Report:

Budget Accuracy – The surplus realized by the Municipality of Shelburne in the 2017-2018 fiscal year can be attributed primarily to the following factors: (1) operating reserves (\$364,290) and gas tax funds (\$87,755) which were allocated to the Broadband Internet Project but not spent because of a delay in necessary federal funding and (2) an organizational realignment which created vacancies in a number of positions which were not filled until partially through the year (\$116,000 operating funds). These two factors accounted for a surplus of approximately 10% of our annual budget.

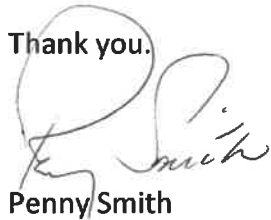
This budget is the continuation of investing in our community and our residents by doing it strategically and within our own fiscal resources entrusted to us by the community. We will continue to work with neighbouring municipalities and others to become as efficient and effective as possible through sharing resources where possible to help keep costs lower for our

citizens and businesses. We will also continue to be a positive proponent of such arrangements where our residents will see a clear benefit in doing so.

As I conclude my remarks, I want to recognize the hard work and dedication of our staff and their ongoing efforts to provide efficient and effective services to our residents. We are truly fortunate to have such competent, knowledgeable and caring staff and on behalf of Council, I thank you.

I would also like to thank my fellow Council members for their time and dedication. As we head into our third year of working together, we can be very proud of what we as a Council have accomplished. We still have important projects underway and it is my hope that we can see them move forward to fruition.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "S".

Penny Smith

Warden