



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

KEY BUDGET MESSAGES

2026/2027 Municipal Operating and Capital Budget

*At the Annual General Meeting on April 27th, 2026, Municipal Council approved a balanced budget with an operating budget of **\$4,713,234**. Details are provided below and available on the municipal [website](#).*

- **Council Priorities:** Council has carefully identified a list of critical needs for the Municipality to ensure that goals and priorities are accomplished. The following priorities have been incorporated in the municipal budget:
 1. **Community-Led Programming** – To partly offset the reduction of provincial funding to the community, Council has increased funding for General Government Grants by \$16,500 to the maximum allowable of \$61,500. This enables flexibility to respond to community needs as the impacts of provincial budget cuts become known.
 2. **Community Development & Recreation** – Council has continued to prioritize recreation and community development initiatives by providing increased funding of \$34,022 to offset the reduction in provincial grant funding for programming, assuring the availability of free summer day camps. A new Community Heroes annual appreciation event will celebrate our many volunteers, first responders and healthcare workers across the municipality.
 3. **Economic Development and Tourism** – Council has continued to prioritize tourism by allocating an additional \$9,735 to support maintenance of the new tourism website, and development of an Economic Development Plan.
 4. **Housing Development** - The second year of the Federal Housing Accelerator Funding has been incorporated within the 2026-2027 budget.
 5. **Climate Change** - Continue work on delivering the Municipal Climate Action Plan through leveraging partnerships with organizations such as the Clean Foundation.
 6. **Fire Services Review** – To prepare for upcoming changes from the province's Fire Protection Services Act, Council has included \$20,000 to assess needs and plan next steps.
 7. **Eastern Region Counties Library Book Program** – Council has set aside \$2,000 in additional funding towards the purchase of books for the library.
- **Tax Rates:** St. Mary's Council is pleased to inform residents that due to careful planning, Council is presenting a balanced budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year with a two-cent tax rate increase per \$100 of assessment. Residential and resource property tax rate will be set at \$1.00 cents per \$100 of assessment and the commercial tax rate will be set at \$2.31 per \$100 of assessment.
- **Area Rates:**
 - Solid Waste Area Rate- has been set at \$116.82 per dwelling and commercial account with structure.
 - Street Light Area Rate- remains unchanged from last year at \$93.72 per account.
 - The Sherbrooke Sewer Area Rate- will remain the same at \$220 per unit.
- **Municipal Low Income Property Tax Exemptions:** Supporting low-income homeowners within the Municipality is a key Council priority for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. For 2026-27 both the income threshold to qualify for a property tax exemption, and the amount of tax exemption available, were increased by 3.1%, which is the amount of the Nova Scotia Consumer Price Index from December 2024 to December 2025.

- **Education and Protective Services** together make up approximately 1/3 of the municipality's operating budget, or 32.3%.
 - **Education Services:** Contributions to the Strait Regional Center for Education are expected to be \$813,009, an increase of \$45,344 or 5.9% over last year's municipal contribution.
 - **Protective Services:** Contributions to the Province for RCMP services are \$708,058, an increase of \$31,030 or 4.6% over last year.
- **Emergency Measures Services:** The Municipality is collaborating with other Municipal units in Guysborough County to develop a Regional Emergency Management Coordinator position as mandated by the Provincial Department of Emergency Management. In recognition of increased weather variability, a well will be drilled at the Recplex to ensure an independent water source.
- **Department of Public Works:** To ensure high quality service, Public Works Department staffing capacity will be solidified in 2026-27, and a Public Works vehicle will be purchased.
- **Municipal General Government Grants:** In addition to a continuation of grants to organizations and School Scholarships, flexible District Grant funding has been maximized to \$9,700 per district for 2026-27, up from \$4,400 per district in 2025-26, allowing emerging needs within the community to be addressed throughout the year.
- **Capital Budgets:** The total Capital Expenditure for this year is \$719,509 which includes secured and non-secured grant funding and includes the following projects:
 - Recplex Surge Protector
 - Recplex Ice Edger
 - Recplex Drilled Well
 - Multi Use/Active Transportation Design
 - 16 Main Street Accessible Washroom Upgrades
 - Water Treatment Plant Cushion Tank Replacement
 - Water Treatment Plan Filter 1 Overhaul
 - Water Treatment – Auto Control System
 - Water Treatment Agitator and Soda Ash Tank
 - West Side Water Distribution Replacement Design
 - Water Main Replacement Clover Farm Parking Lot
 - Outside Storage for Chemical Barrels
 - Wastewater Inflow Report Recommendations
 - Wastewater Lift Station Replacements
 - Wastewater Electrical Panel Upgrade Phase I
 - Wastewater Exterior Aeration Piping
 - Wastewater Blower Replacement
 - Water Meter Upgrades
 - Low Carbon Communities Recplex Solar Program
 - Purchase of Public Works Vehicle