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News Release

Municipal Budget Approved for 2025 – Decrease Tax Rates in Majority of Zones

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ST. GEORGE – Council for Eastern Charlotte approved its budget during their Regular Meeting of Council on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at the Magaguadavic Place Community Center.

The tax rates in most tax sub-units in Eastern Charlotte decreased over 2024. The tax rate is the number of cents per \$100 of assessed property value. The tax rates for 2024 for the sub-units of Eastern Charlotte are as follows:

TAX AUTHORITY	PREVIOUS RATE	NEW RATE	+ OR -	DIFFERENCE
Beaver Harbour	0.4158	0.3800	Decrease	-0.0358
Blacks Harbour (Village)	1.4414	1.4100	Decrease	-0.0314
Fundy Bay	0.3973	0.3800	Decrease	-0.0173
Pennfield	0.3789	0.3800	Increase	0.0011
St. George (Rural)	0.3996	0.3800	Decrease	-0.0196
St. George (Town)	1.2748	1.2700	Decrease	-0.0048
Second Falls/ Bonny River	0.4035	0.3800	Decrease	-0.0235
St. Patrick	0.3595	0.3800	Increase	0.0205

The 2025 tax rates calibrate all “rural” tax sub-units into a common “outside” rate. All of the rural units were part of former Local Service Districts (LSDs) prior to Municipal Reform in 2023. Council’s next step is to request the Province combine these six sub-units into one to ensure a more stable tax environment from year to year.

Property assessments increased by 8.9 percent over 2024, a total of \$733,127,800. The General Operating Budget was set at \$6,942,479.77, which is a 6.19% increase over 2024. The Utility Budgets, being separate for Blacks Harbour and St. George water systems, total \$609,908 and \$979,860, respectively.

The municipality continues to see a reduction of the Community Funding and Equalization Grant (CFEG), annual funding provided by the Province. For 2025, the Municipality will receive \$445,302 from the CFEG. When compared to the CFEG contribution to the area prior to municipal reform/amalgamation, there is a 38.65 percent decrease (with \$725,842 received in 2022).

For 2025, the cost of mandated services from the Regional Service Commission (RSC 10) was also par with the previous, totaling \$686,184. These services include landfill operation, local planning, building inspection, regional economic development, tourism promotion and regional transportation.

For Protective Services in 2025: The Fire Services, provided by Eastern Charlotte Fire Rescue, is budgeted at \$914,118, a 3.27 percent decrease. Animal control, provided by the NB SPCA, is \$20,196, an 8.8 percent increase. And Policing, provided by the RCMP, is at a total cost of \$2,230,087, a 3.419 percent increase.

“As a Council we are deeply concerned about whether we are receiving the best possible service. Council is currently following other communities in New Brunswick that are exploring alternative policing options and will continue to monitor their success to determine if we should adopt similar approaches.”, stated Deputy Mayor David Hatt at the January 13 budget presentation meeting.

There will be an \$11 per year increase to water and sewerage rates in St. George, to a new annual rate of \$557, while the water and sewerage rates in Blacks Harbour will hold at \$496 annually. The reason for holding the Blacks Harbour rate is the ongoing impacts relating to repairs. The Blacks Harbour water system is currently under a multi-year study for improvements to the water infrastructure.

The 2025 budget provides support for economic development initiatives as well as funding for infrastructure projects in the coming year. Continuing from 2024, the budget once again provides \$200,000 toward development grants to support housing projects. In addition, there is \$513,000 in the budget to fund improvements such as road construction and acquiring larger assets.

“Housing has been and continues to be a priority of this Council. To secure the construction of these housing projects in Eastern Charlotte, rather than elsewhere in the Province, these incentives are necessary and will greatly assist in moving ahead several projects.”, said Deputy Mayor David Hatt.

The recently established department of Parks and Recreation has taken on a substantial workload, overseeing the upkeep of the Eastern Charlotte Recreational Complex (built in 1967), as well as numerous ballfields, a splash pad, Canal Beach, Community Gardens, and basketball courts. With a dedicated department in place, these public spaces are maintained to the high standards that users anticipate and appreciate. Parks and Recreation is budgeted at \$864,267 for 2025, a 5.85% increase over 2024. The municipality has made improvements over the last year to the community halls in Pennfield and Second Falls. These rural community halls are available for the public to rent. Eastern Charlotte remains committed in improving and developing recreation options for its residents.

“Overall, 2025 looks to be a promising year with several new projects on the horizon for the municipality, as well as long-awaited housing projects finally coming to our area,” said Mayor John Craig. “As we move into 2025, we can start to see the light at the end of the tunnel regarding the forced journey of municipal reform and amalgamation. It has been a long journey that has been championed by this Council with the hard day-to-day work of the staff of Eastern Charlotte.”