

Annual Newsletter



2023 BUDGET AND TAX POLICY INFORMATION

The 2024 Operating and Capital Budget was considered and passed by the Town of Milestone Council on April 11, 2023.

The following Tax Policy was passed and applied to the Total Taxable Assessment for the Town of \$49,062,090, which is up slightly from \$48,218,160 in 2023:

2024 Municipal Mill rate – 5.00 mills
 Base Tax – \$215.00 – Ag., Res, Comm
 Base Tax - \$915.00 Land & Improvements – Ag., Res., Comm
 There will be no change to the mill rate or base tax in 2024.

Municipal Operating Revenues, excluding any capital grant allocations, total \$1,406,603, Operating expenses, excluding capital purchases, total \$1,405,169.

Municipalities essentially have two sources of revenue: Government Transfers (Revenue Sharing) and own-source revenues (our tax base and Utility revenues). The most significant changes to the budget for 2024 are the changes to the Utility rates. The approved rates take into consideration the rising costs of “everything” (SaskPower & SaskEnergy, Chemical costs and an aging infrastructure). The new rate structure is based on a cost recovery model, and the fee structure reflects a “user pay” system, meaning the more water you use over the base rate, the more your consumption charges will be. We ask the residents of the Town to be mindful of watering their lawns and gardens.

A more detailed explanation of the increases is included with this newsletter, along with the applicable billing.

2025 Assessment Re-Inspection Year

The Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA) will be updating property valuations. SAMA mailed out a letter with a form asking you to update the information about your home and property. Staff from SAMA will be in the community, possibly as early as July and August, working the re-inspection of all properties in the Town of Milestone. Council and Administration encourage all residents to take the time to complete this form to ensure that their property is appropriately assessed.

Yearly Compliance Report for Drinking Water

Saskatchewan Environment “Drinking Water Quality and Compliance Regulations” requires that at least once a year, The Town of Milestone provide notification to consumers of the quality of water produced and supplied, as well as information on the performance of the waterworks in submitting samples as required by the “Permit to Operate Waterworks.” This is to notify, under these regulations, that a summary of the Town of Milestone’s water quality and sample submission compliance record for the January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, period is now available at the town office. This information can also be seen online at www.saskwater.com.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor - Jeff Brown

Councillor Mike
Gallais

Councillor
Shannon Garratt

Councillor Rena
Ohrt

Councillor Mike
Sjodin

Councillor Greg
Treleaven

Councillor Jamey
Wolfe



Municipal Capital Projects & Infrastructure

Like most communities in Saskatchewan, Milestone has an aging infrastructure. The Council has been attempting to address this over the last number of years, including a new water treatment plant, new town wells, a lagoon expansion, the annual paving requirements of the Town, and the annual maintenance of the sewer lines. Here are a few of the Major items on the not-so-distant horizon:

1. **Yogi Lift Sewer Pump Upgrades:** This year's major project includes the replacement of the pump and piping at the Yogi lift, with project costs estimated to be nearly six figures when all costs are calculated.
2. **Town Of Milestone Landfill:** A couple of years ago, the Town began the process to address the Town of Milestone Landfill. For those that aren't aware, the Govt of Saskatchewan has been 'encouraging' smaller communities to initiate closure of landfills. The Town is currently looking at transitioning our landfill to a transfer station so as not to close it completely. Once the transfer station is operational, we will begin the process of closing the landfill, which currently has cost estimates of more than \$500,000. More information will be available as the project progresses.
3. **Town of Milestone Water Treatment Plant:** The Water Plant is essentially complete, with a few little items remaining, such as landscaping the exterior. The Town has made an application to retrofit our pre-filtration system at the Water Plant from Green Sand to a bio-filtration process. This change will benefit the Town in a number of areas, including but not limited to increased treatment capacity, a significant decrease in chemical costs, power savings, and the amount of wastewater currently sent to the lagoon. This project is in the very early stages of planning.

Beyond the substantial capital projects, the Town must also anticipate unexpected issues that may arise during the fiscal year. These could encompass events like water breaks, sewage problems, and more.

Community Concerns (Most Complaints Received)

Unightly and Untidy Premises: Concerns sometimes are received regarding the overgrowth of grass and weeds, unsightly materials stored on the property, derelict vehicles, and others. The Council will request that the issues as identified be addressed. If the property remains untidy, the Council may, however reluctantly, proceed under The Municipalities Act, 2005 and local bylaws to have the work performed. If the municipality is required to proceed with such action, the associated costs will be added to and form part of the taxes on the property.

SCHOOL ZONE PARKING: We receive a number of calls expressing concerns about the school and parking, specifically at the drop-off zone before school, at lunchtime, and after school. Signs are erected with the speed and No Stopping Areas in front of the school on Prairie Ave. (From King St. to Solberg St on Prairie Ave.). Please do not stop within these areas during the times of 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM. Stopping in these areas causes concerns for the children getting on and off the bus and kids walking to school. It also makes it hard for the buses to get in and out of the parking lot when the street is congested. Please refrain from stopping in designated areas.

Milestone Early Learning Centre: We are fortunate to have the Milestone Early Learning Center open at 203 Main Street, and it has been a welcome addition to our community. There is more traffic in this area, and we remind residents to be alert and drive with extra caution at the intersection of Prairie Ave and Main Street.

BACK LANES: Just a reminder that the Town does not maintain back lanes, so please avoid back lanes after rainfall as they get rutted up and, in some instances, adjacent private property has been damaged. In most cases, contractors from out of Town seem to find their way in the back lanes. If you see this happening, please let us know so we can invoice them for the repairs.