

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance Committee

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, NS

Tuesday, April 1, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.

Attendance

Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3, Chair
Councillor Edgar Burns, District 7, Vice Chair
Mayor Elspeth McLean-Wile
Councillor Morgen Reinhardt, District 1
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5
Councillor Alison Smith, District 6
Councillor Ben Brooks, District 9
Deputy Mayor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10

Regrets

Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8

Staff

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance
April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk
Joanne Powers, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Councillor Oickle called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. Announcements/Acknowledgements/Recognition

Councillor Moore recognized the New Germany Fire Department for holding their 2nd Annual Stuff a Firetruck Food Bank Drive where they collected food and raised \$810 for the New Germany Food Bank.

Councillor Smith acknowledged the Thinking Beyond Band-Aids event hosted by the Lunenburg County Community Health Board where they discussed how stretched community resources are in relation to housing, poverty, affordability and the concerns about volunteer compacity.

2.1 Proclamation – World Autism Acceptance Month

Mayor McLean-Wile proclaimed the month of April 2025 as Autism Acceptance Month and encouraged all of the Municipality of Lunenburg's citizens to recognize the autistic

individuals/people with autism, family members, caregivers, educators, and other professionals who strive to make Nova Scotia an inclusive and accessible place for us all to call home.

3. Public Input (15 Minutes) - Nil

4. Changes/Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Bell that the April 1, 2025, Finance Committee Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes – March 4, 2025

The Minutes of March 4, 2025, Finance Committee meeting were approved as circulated.

6. Business Arising from Minutes - Nil

7. Presentations/Scheduled Times - Nil

8. Referrals from Committees/Council

8.1 LCLC – 2025 Operating & Capital Budget

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer, reviewed the 2025-26 Operating and Capital Budget for the LCLC (included in the agenda package). He explained that the LCLC saw significant changes over the past few years and in November, Marta Selassie was hired as Interim General Manager. The Municipal Joint Services Board Comptroller was hired to assist in getting the financials in order, to correct the financial statements for this current fiscal, and help them budget for next year.

It was noted that financial management was pointed out as being problematic and Mr. MacEwan advised that a plan for strategic planning will begin this fiscal. Governance and planning will need to be addressed going forward.

Moved by Councillor Hubley, seconded by Mayor McLean-Wile that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the 2025-2026 LCLC Operating expenditure budget in the amount of \$1,917,500 with the Municipality's Operating Grant being \$958,750. Carried unanimously.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the 2025-2026 LCLC Capital Budget in the amount of \$206,500 with the Municipality's Capital grant being \$103,250. Carried unanimously.

9. Staff Reports

9.1 Finance Department

9.1.1 Laserfiche Contract Renewal – Alternate Procurement

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance, discussed the report titled, “Laserfiche Contract Renewal – Alternate Procurement” (included in the agenda package). She explained that Laserfiche is a document management software that the Municipality uses for its electronic document control. The version currently being used will no longer be supported.

Laserfiche was initially purchased in 2016 and managed by Thinkdox Inc. Lisa Bozek, IT Director at MJSB, negotiated with Thinkdox in the amount of \$38,990 with a 4.9% increase over 5 years. There is also a one-time fee for migration for \$7,175. Because the pricing was only guaranteed until March 31, 2025, alternative procurement had to be used to secure the contract.

9.1.2 2025-26 Municipal Operating & Capital Budgets

a. Staff Presentation on Budget

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance, reviewed the report and presentation titled, “2025-26 Draft Operating and Capital Budget” (included in the package and attached to the minutes).

The 2025-2026 Draft Operating Budget totals \$46,693,200, maintains the existing tax rates, with a surplus of \$120,600.

The 2025-2026 Draft Capital Budget & Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) Investment includes 38 projects totalling \$18.3M. Grants leveraged and CCBF used to cover 65% of the total cost, leaving 35% from municipal sources

Ms. Wentzell explained that the Financial Condition Indicator (FCI) thresholds provide municipalities with a common set of indicators to provide an indication of strengths, trends and risk areas where a municipality should focus.

b. Draft 2025/2026 Budget Highlights

The budget highlights showcase how Council invested in projects and initiatives that align with the Council’s five strategic priorities:

- Regional Economic Development
- Infrastructure Upgrades, Expansion, and Management
- Quality of Life
- Climate Change Action
- Communication and Engagement

c. Expanded Public Input - Nil

d. Council Deliberation and Direction to Staff

Clarification was provided on how the CCBF is used and for what projects. There is a policy that stipulates that grant money gets used first and that includes the CCBF. It has been used for paving projects and trail capital costs. It was also noted that the 5-yr capital investment plan requires approval, but council only approves expenditures in year one and must authorize all reserve spending.

Moved by Mayor McLean-Wile, seconded by Councillor Bell that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the 2025-26 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets and Canada Community-Building Fund Investment as presented. Carried unanimously.

There was a request that the budget highlights include transportation under both the Climate Change Action and Quality of Life priority categories

Sarah Kucharski, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement, played a promotional video on the 2025-26 municipal budget highlights for council's review. It was requested that since council has not approved the solar garden project that the language should say "exploring".

9.2 Administration Department

9.2.1 Public Engagement re Municipal-Wide Land Use Planning

Sarah Kucharski, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement, reviewed the report titled, "Public Engagement on Municipal-Wide Land Use Planning", (included in the agenda package).

She provided an overview of the timelines to date and next steps for public engagement and clarified why a large open house style engagement may not be as effective as smaller engagement sessions in every district.

It was requested that a handout with basic information and minimum standards be developed for distribution.

The meeting recessed at 10:11 a.m. and resumed at 10:25 a.m.

10. Consideration of Correspondence - Nil

11. Recommendations from Council – Nil

12. Added Items - Nil

13. In Camera

13.1 Sale of Land under Section 22(2)(a) of the MGA

At 11:17 a.m., it was moved by Deputy Mayor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Burns that the Finance Committee come out of In Camera and return to open session. Carried unanimously.

Finance Committee in session.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Draft Operating & Capital Budget 2025/26

Finance Committee Meeting
April 1, 2025



Welcome to the Budget Process!

- **Introduction to the budgets**

- Feb 25 – 9am: Operating budget - complete
- Feb 27 – 6pm: Operating budget - complete
- March 4 – 9am: Capital Budget - complete
- March 6 – 6pm: Capital Budget - complete

- Capital & Operating budget discussion 1 (March 11 – 9am) - complete

- **Capital & Operating budget discussion 2 (April 1 – 9am)**

- **Final review and approval – (April 8 – Evening meeting)**

- Staff presentation
- Public input
- **Options & revision discussion**

Purpose for Today

- **Director of Finance will present the Draft Budgets**
- **Directors will answer any questions**
- **Final opportunity for public input on the budget**

- **Expectations of Council:**
 - Receive the revised budget information
 - Listen to public input
 - Ask questions of staff for better understanding
 - Forward the Draft Budgets (including any final revisions made today) to Council for approval



Operating Budget 5 Year Financial Strategy

Description	2023-24	2024-25	FORECAST	DRAFT	Projected →			
	<u>Prior</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Current</u>	BUDGET				
	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2027-28</u>	<u>2028-29</u>	<u>2029-30</u>
Revenue Sources								
Residential property tax	\$25,626,084	\$27,950,000	\$27,920,000	\$29,613,000	\$30,945,585	\$32,338,136	\$33,308,280	\$34,307,529
Commercial property tax	2,808,839	3,195,700	3,191,500	3,230,700	3,295,314	3,361,220	3,428,445	3,497,014
Other taxes	4,738,145	4,327,800	5,224,800	4,625,200	4,671,452	4,764,881	4,860,179	4,957,382
Fire Protection	4,370,604	4,735,400	4,752,600	5,028,000	5,128,560	5,231,131	5,335,754	5,442,469
Transfers from other govts	322,893	794,200	445,928	697,400	704,374	711,418	718,532	725,717
Other revenue sources ¹	3,863,590	3,715,300	3,998,805	3,619,500	3,655,695	3,692,252	3,729,174	3,766,466
	\$41,730,155	\$44,718,400	\$45,533,633	\$46,813,800	\$48,400,980	\$50,099,039	\$51,380,364	\$52,696,577
Expenditures								
Discretionary Expenditures ²	\$17,915,593	\$22,585,900	\$20,988,025	\$24,960,800	\$23,392,237	\$23,789,530	\$24,190,955	\$24,596,390
CCBF Investment	262,908	1,159,000	1,159,000	432,300	433,380	441,718	459,600	470,500
Mandatory Expenditures								
Mandatory Contributions	10,886,778	11,550,700	11,550,700	12,519,400	13,562,481	14,270,970	14,884,657	15,316,730
Other Mandatory Expenditures	7,974,702	8,657,800	9,396,700	9,091,200	9,533,252	9,996,906	10,483,223	10,993,314
Deficit from prior year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debt servicing	0	0	0	0	0	720,000	704,000	958,000
Reserves	4,690,174	738,000	733,000	-310,500	1,410,915	835,911	617,748	328,751
	23,551,655	20,946,500	21,680,400	21,300,100	24,506,649	25,823,787	26,689,628	27,596,795
	\$41,730,156	\$44,691,400	\$43,827,425	\$46,693,200	\$48,332,266	\$50,055,035	\$51,340,183	\$52,663,685
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$0	\$27,000	\$1,706,208	\$120,600	\$68,714	\$44,003	\$40,181	\$32,892

Operating Budget Pressures

Future Service Commitments

- Transit
- Community Hub Operations
- Capital Budget Commitments
(i.e. Debt: 20-year amortization period)



Draft Operating Budget Information & Highlights

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Annual Budget	2024/25 Budget Forecast	2025/26 Adjusted Baseline	2025/26 Additions	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Percent Change Budget 2026 to Budget 2025
Expenditures							
General Government Services	\$ 5,953,922	\$ 7,662,000	\$ 7,428,800	\$ 7,411,400	\$ 189,800	\$ 7,601,200	-0.79%
Protective Services	10,589,582	11,069,000	11,050,100	12,103,800	(2,000)	12,103,800	9.35%
Transportation Services	2,345,160	2,923,000	2,854,600	2,687,800	-	2,687,800	-8.05%
Environmental Health Services	3,776,400	4,159,600	4,244,460	4,471,400	33,500	4,504,900	8.30%
Public Health	28,950	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environmental Planning and Zoning	1,872,360	3,392,300	2,960,100	2,648,700	2,323,500	5,006,700	47.59% *
Recreation, Culture & Tourism	2,933,757	4,100,700	3,909,565	3,444,900	60,000	3,504,900	-14.53%
Education	9,539,851	10,646,800	10,646,800	11,594,400	-	11,594,400	8.90%
Debt, Financing and Transfers	4,690,174	738,000	733,000	1,778,700	(2,059,200)	(310,500)	*
Total Expenditures	41,730,155	44,691,400	43,827,425	46,141,100	545,600	46,693,200	4.48%
Revenue							
Tax Revenue	37,773,322	40,442,600	41,322,600	42,695,000	-	42,695,000	5.57%
Non Tax Revenue	3,956,834	4,275,800	4,211,033	4,083,800	35,000	4,118,800	-3.67%
Total Revenue	41,730,155	44,718,400	45,533,633	46,778,800	35,000	46,813,800	4.69%
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ -	\$ 27,000	\$ 1,706,208	\$ 637,700	\$ (510,600)	\$ 120,600	

* Includes 1 time addition \$2M for Community Hub funded from Reserve Transfer (\$0 effect on Tax Rate)

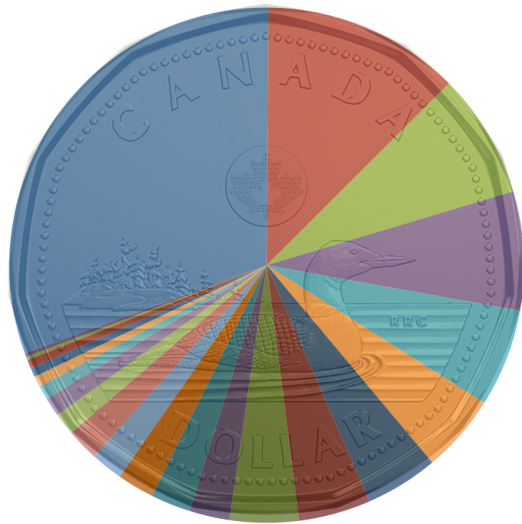
Draft Budgets are prepared by Departments

- **Adjusted Baseline:** adjustments made to existing budget to ensure current service levels are maintained
- **Additions:** Items added to enhance service levels or one-time costs for specific projects

Tax rate remains unchanged



Draft Operating Budget - Cost Summary

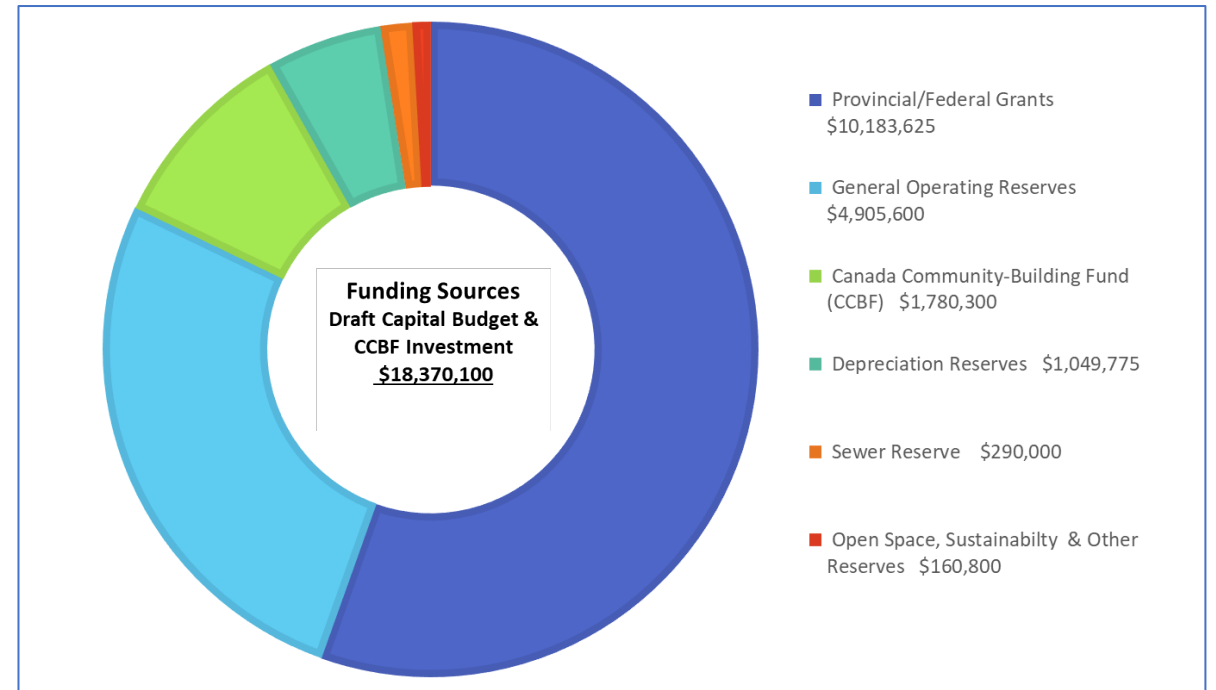
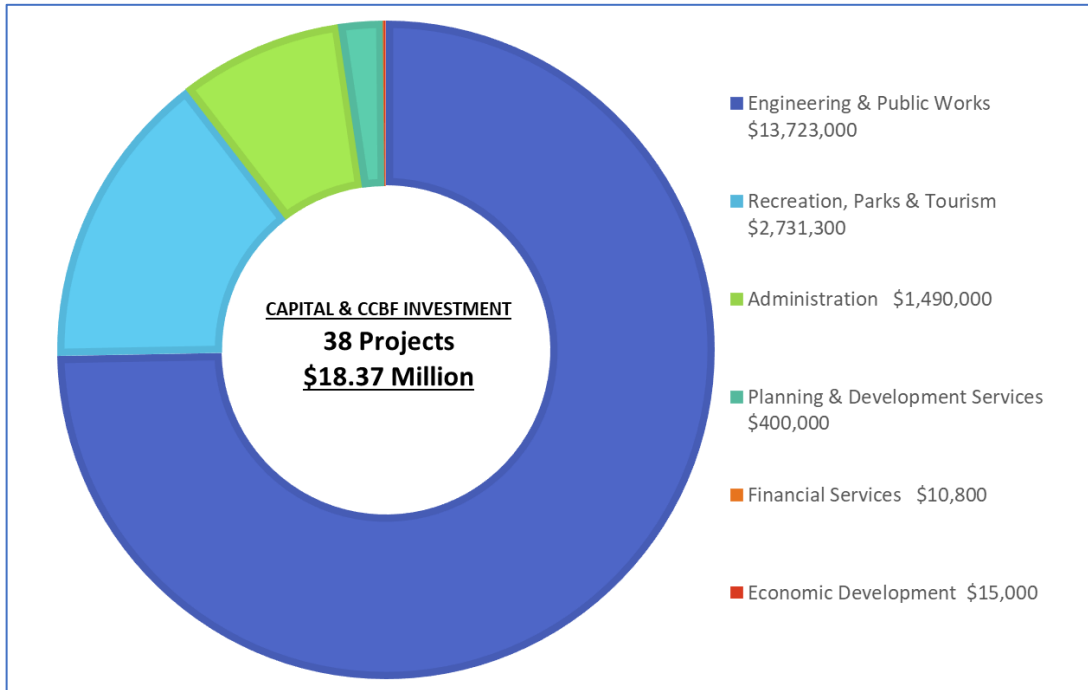


- Education \$0.312
- Administrative and Finance \$0.080
- Economic Development \$0.063
- Roads and Streets \$0.047
- Waste Site \$0.044
- Council and Other Legislative \$0.026
- Assessment Services \$0.021
- Inspection Services \$0.014
- Emergency Measures \$0.009
- Regional Libraries \$0.006
- Animal Control & Senior Safety \$0.002
- Police (RCMP) \$0.126
- Recreation \$0.076
- Planning and Zoning \$0.050
- Garbage Collections (Curb Side) \$0.046
- Multi-Purpose Facility \$0.026
- Engineering Services \$0.023
- Grants to Organizations \$0.021
- Grants to Fire Departments \$0.012
- Tourism \$0.007
- Election Costs \$0.006
- CES Facility \$(0.002)

Cost Summary (excluding Area Rates)	Portion of \$1 Tax
Mandatory Costs: Education , Assessment & Libraries	\$0.34
Other: Policing, Roads & Streets, Waste Collection & Disposal	\$0.26
Balance for Other Municipal Services	\$0.40

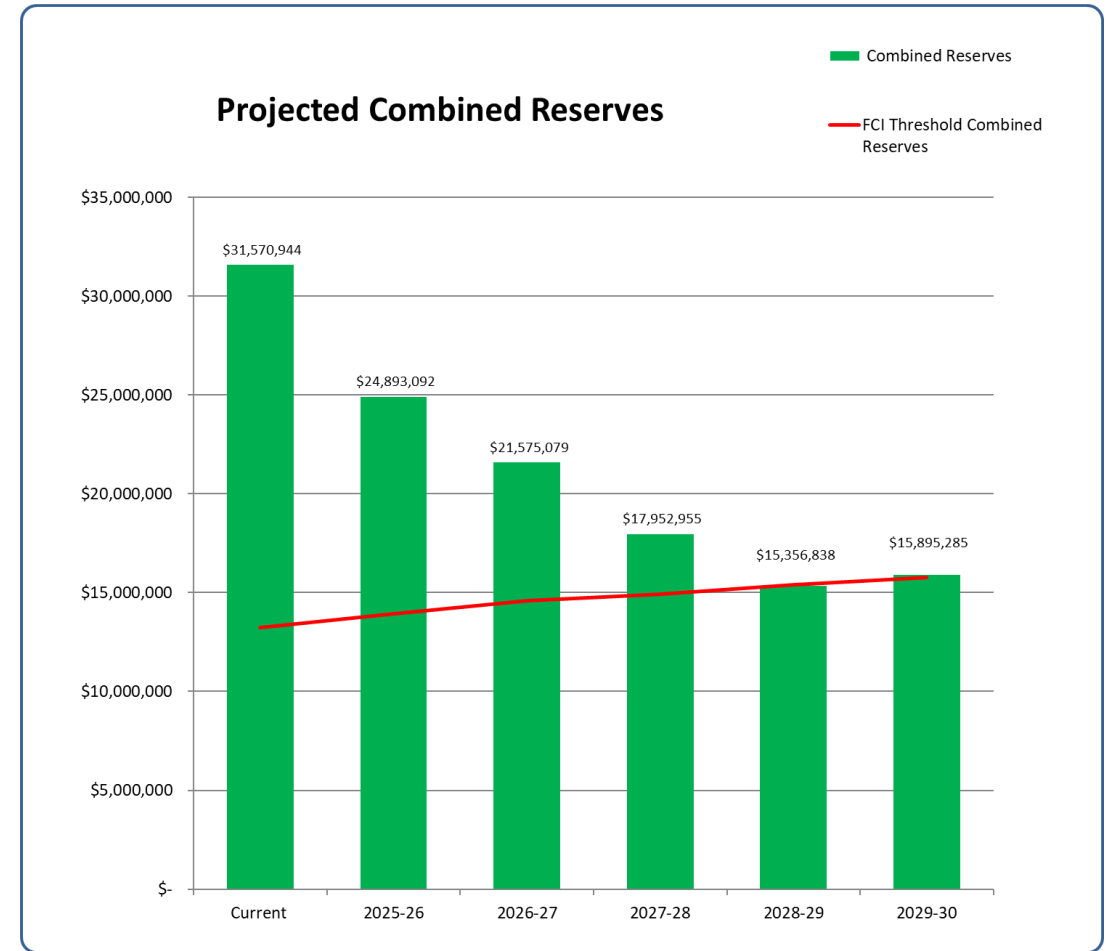
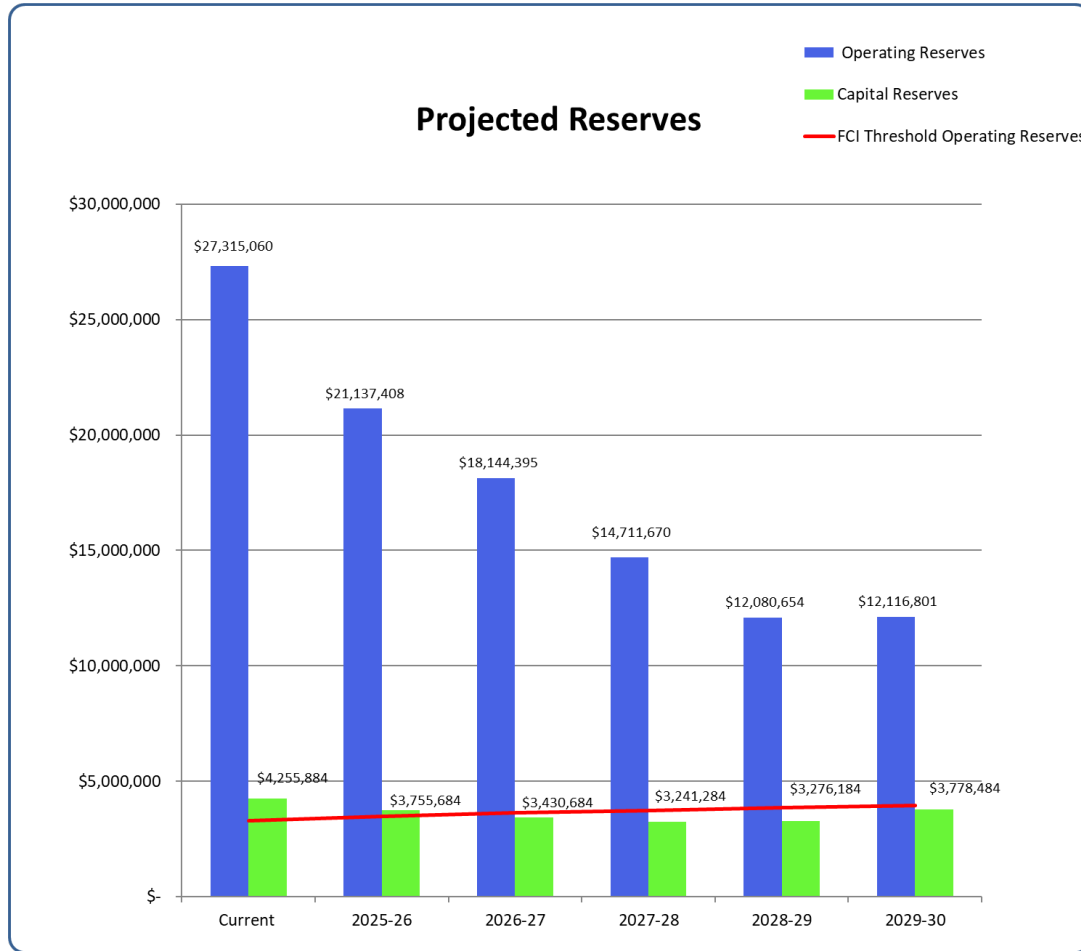


Draft Capital Budget – Year 1 Summary



65% of Year 1 Projects are funded through Grants and Canada Community-Building Fund (35% Municipal Cost)

Reserves Projections



2025/26 Draft Operating & Capital Budget

Thank you

