



**Clareville**  
REAL • LIFE • POTENTIAL



# 2024 ANNUAL BUDGET

Presented By: Heber Smith, Chair of Finance and Administration

## 2024 Budget Highlights

- No mill rate Increases for Residential/Commercial Property tax or Business Tax
- No Residential/Commercial Water/Sewer Increase
- Waste Collection – New \$25 environmental fee
- No Poll Tax Increases
- Debt Ratio – Less than 18%
- Budget Increase of 8.81%
- Economic Development
  - Wayfinding, Marketing and Attraction Strategy
  - Winter Expo
  - Community Housing Needs Assessment
  - Arts Initiative
- Recreation
  - EEC Engineering Assessment
  - Zero turn lawn mower/ ATV dump cart for trail work/Bike racks
  - Soccer net replacement/Repairs at the Soccer Hut
  - Elizabeth Swan Park softball field fencing
  - Repainting of lines on outdoor track
  - New Town Christmas lighting
  - Winter/Christmas display for Elizabeth Swan Park
  - Automatic door mechanism for the Bill Davis Chalet
- Other
  - Multi Stream Waste Collection
  - Software Upgrades
  - Continued Pest Control measures
  - Pilot – Waste-Water Monitoring
- Equipment
  - Sweeper truck
  - Pick Up/Work-Truck – Public Works
  - Lift Station Upgrades
  - Emergency Generator
- Roadwork & Other Infrastructure
  - MYCW 2024-2025 Huntley Drive & Tilley's Road, Lower Shoal Harbour River, Water Plant Upgrades, Waste Water Upgrades
  - Gas Tax – Thistle Place & other streets
  - Additional sidewalk work

## **Introduction: Sustaining Growth**

Good afternoon Mayor Pickett, fellow Councillors, staff, and those joining us in-person and online. As Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, it is my pleasure to present Budget 2024 for the Town of Clarendville.

The yearly preparation for a budget allows for time to reflect on the achievements of the past year and set new goals for the year ahead.

The 2023 accomplishments were possible due to the help of so many other individuals and organizations. It was also a year of attracting new residents from communities across the province as the Town businesses continued to develop a range of age-friendly services and age-appropriate housing.

In 2024 the Town will continue to work with developers to further develop more affordable housing within the community. We will also further strategize to focus on rising interest rates and inflationary pressures.

Supporting continued growth will require our Council to make strategic and often difficult decisions to ensure that we continue on the right path for our Town and for our residents. The decisions that I am about to discuss were made in what this Council feels to be in the best interest of all of our stakeholders and in line with the Town's stated vision.

We currently live in some financially challenging times which has hit everyone hard and the expenditures of the Town are certainly no exception to this situation. During the fall we worked with departmental managers to review all departmental spending. We have reviewed priorities and options and gathered the necessary data from staff to make informed decisions. The Town has experienced significant increases as economic circumstances has meant that it is costing more to provide the programs and services that our residents expect, need and deserve.

To give our work some context, I will first reflect on the year past and then give an outline of our current situation, finishing with an overview of the plans that the Council has put in place to better manage our town through 2024.

## **The Fiscal Plan for 2024**

The 2024 Budget presents a plan for the Town's revenue and expenditures in the year ahead. This planning has been a consultative effort. The Finance Committee sought input externally, as well as internally. Each of the Town's departments was asked to prioritize their requirements for the year ahead. Council and staff put a concerted effort into strategic spending that we know will support Clarendville's continued growth.

I want to first express my appreciation on behalf of our Committee (Councillor Keith Fillier, Councillor Deidra Strowbridge and myself), to our management staff for their dedication and commitment to starting this budgetary process. A special thanks to Angela Giles, our Director of Finance & Administration and David Harris, our CAO, who spent many hours evaluating the various scenarios that brought us to this presentation. Additionally, I want to extend a thank you to our Director of Public Works - Rick Wells, Fire Chief - Cory Feltham, Recreation Manager - Brandon Reardon, Economic Development Officer - Colin Holloway, Town Clerk - Erin Dicks, as well as our outstanding office staff who gathered the information for the Committee.

Council's overall budget for 2024 matches revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$12,412,707 compared to \$11,407,830 in 2023, an increase of approximately 8.81% from the 2023 budget.

## **2023 Town Projects**

### **Procurement**

During 2023 the Town Hall staff began the implementation of new software updates to the financial software. These improvements will allow for advances in electronic procurement processes to ensure a more efficient and streamlined approach.

### **Asset Management Plan**

The Town, through funding, was able to invest in completing an Asset Management Plan which is now required to obtain funding through the Canada Community Building Fund (Formerly Gas Tax). This plan outlines

the condition and assessment of assets that the Town of Clarendville owns and provides for an ongoing and long-term process that will allow the Town to make the best possible investment decisions.

## **The Shoal Harbour Causeway Bridge Replacement**

The Shoal Harbour Causeway Bridge is now complete and had its unofficial opening on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Trident Construction began construction in the spring of 2023 and delivered a finished product that will serve Clarendville and its neighbouring communities for many years to come. This project was equally cost-shared between the Province, the Federal Government and the Town of Clarendville. The Causeway also includes the new pedestrian bridge which is a favorite destination for many walkers. The first payment for the Town's financial commitment of the development will form a portion of the obligations of the 2024 Budget.

## **Strategic Road Upgrades**

2023 was a busy year for the Town's Public Works Department as work was completed on key town road infrastructure. This past year saw road improvements to Gilbert Street, Balsom Street, Summerville Heights, Wiseman's Road, Thorburn Place, Drover Place and Emerald Avenue. Sidewalk work was completed on Memorial Drive, Shoal Harbour Drive and Russell Place.

## **Capital Equipment**

The Town purchased a sewer jet trailer in 2023 that allowed improved services with respect to water/sewer flooding mitigation, along with a multi-purpose tractor for the Recreation Department.

## **Economic Development**

2023 was the inaugural year for the Town in terms of its focus on economic development. Supported by the Economic Development, Tourism and Communication Committee, Council has successfully focused on several key projects and initiatives which leveraged additional funding for the Town.

Building an effective communication strategy has allowed the Town to explore new ways of keeping residents informed. In January, we released an Economic Review 2022-2023 which illustrated that the Town of Clarendville, following the Covid-19 Pandemic, is starting to recover socially and economically. In fact, the economic outlook suggested that the Town, now the second fastest growing municipality in the province, is poised to see more people move to this area and to have new businesses either expand current operations or establish new store fronts.

Setting the stage for business growth and expansion is a key objective of the Town. In 2022, the Town had a vision of developing this area as a Tourism Destination. With support from ACOA and the Dept. of Industry, Energy and Technology, a budget of \$140,000 was received to support the development of a new **Sustainable Tourism Enhancement Program**. Through input and partnerships with tourism operators and community organizations, we successfully completed a Sustainable Tourism Plan in July of this year.

The Sustainable Tourism Plan has since become the impetus for new projects and initiatives that further help this community thrive and prosper. One such initiative was the **Wheels and Heels Fall Festival** that brought visitors to the Town and helped highlight the wonderful amenities and attractions that make this town a great place to live and to work. The success of this event was in large part through a \$99,000 funding grant from ACOA as well as the support of community organizations like the Clarendville Area Recreation Association, Arts Under the Stars, Discovery Trail Snowmobile Association and the Town's Economic Development and Recreation Departments.

The success of the Wheels and Heels Fall Festival has also had a positive impact on local organizations. The Discovery Trail Snowmobile Association, a leader in snowmobile and ATV trail development was successful in receiving more than \$100,000 in funding to further enhance the vast trail network that is provided to our residents and visitors alike. The Town was pleased to be a partner in this project and contributed \$3,300 towards the project.

Supporting the Clarendville Area Chamber of Commerce has also been a priority for the Town. Throughout this year, the Town Council has worked in

tandem with the local Chamber to explore new opportunities to facilitate business engagement. In October, the Town partnered with the Chamber of Commerce, Business Development of Canada, ACOA, CBDC, NLOWE and the Dept. of Industry, Energy and Technology to host Small Business Week 2023 at the new Beaumont.

## Recreation

The Town's Recreation Department held many successful events including Winter Carnival, Clarendville Days, the first **On the Rocks Concert in the Park**, and the Pumpkin Walk. These events were enjoyed by hundreds of residents and visitors alike.

These events were coupled with recreation projects such as the new safety netting at Elizabeth Swan Park, rejuvenation of the Wellness Trail connection between the Rotary and Bare Mountain Trail, along with new and improved trail mapping and signage.

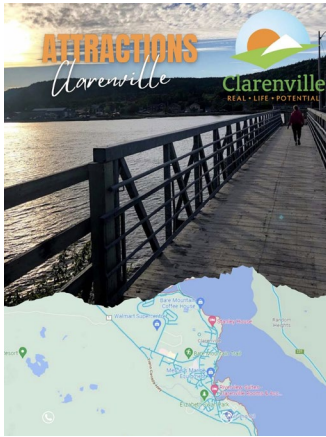
As well, the Town continues to partner with the Sole Sisters organization to improve the park lighting for Elizabeth Swan Park.

## Age-Friendly Initiatives

The Town, through the 80+ volunteers that make up Random Age-Friendly Communities(RAF), continues to support the CREST bus for seniors and people with mobility challenges. RAF continued with the Age-Friendly Business Initiative project during 2023. This initiative has and will serve Clarendville businesses well providing them with a sustainable competitive advantage in skillfully serving the needs of a growing seniors population. In 2023 the Town provided Random Age Friendly with a \$5,000 grant and will continue that support in 2024.



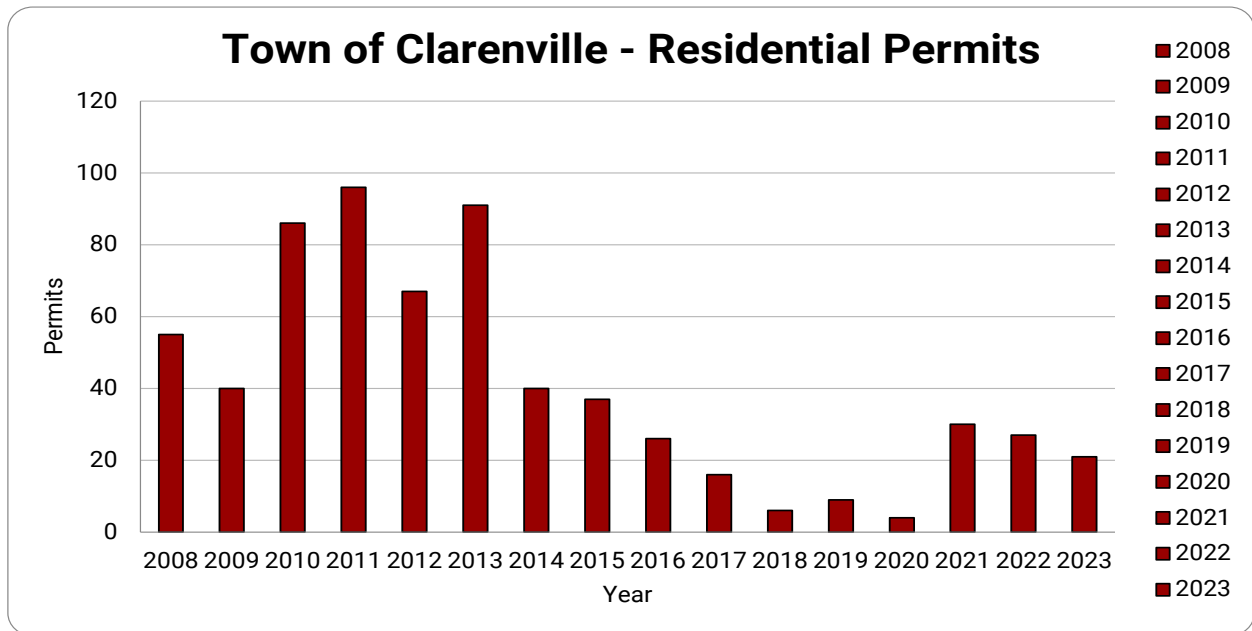
## The Doctor Recruitment Initiative



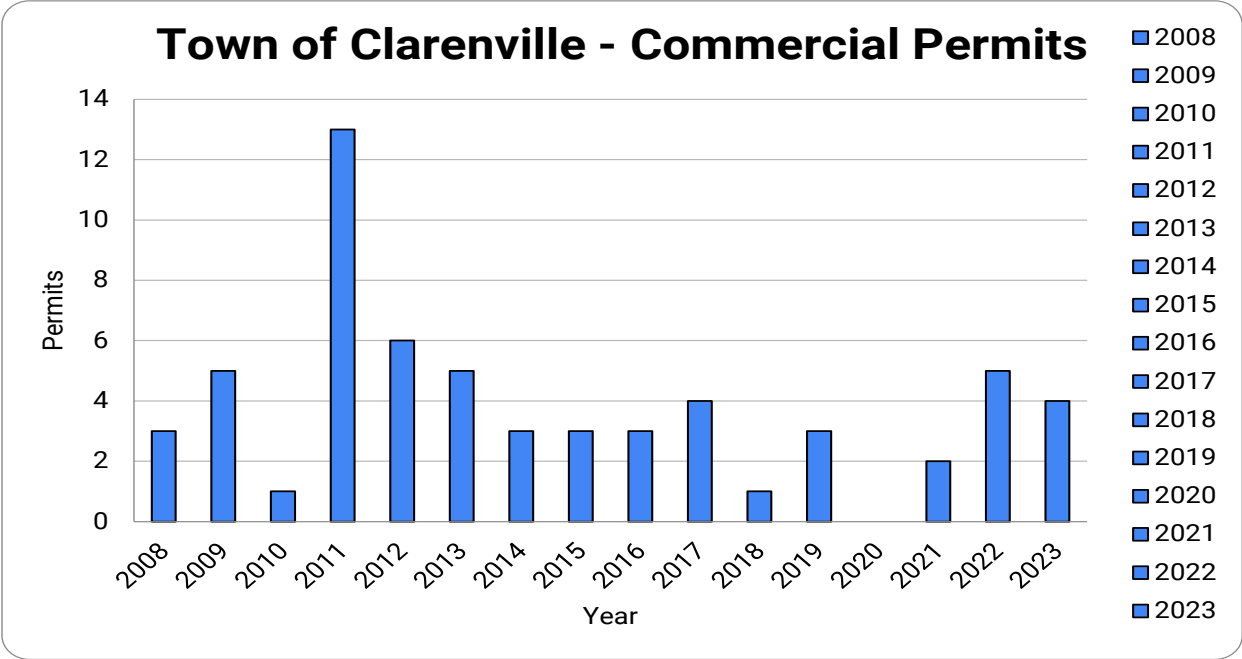
In 2023, due to the challenges of attracting and retaining medical professionals, the Town of Clareville partnered with Eastern Health and the local medical community in an initiative to attract and retain medical professionals. This program will continue in 2024.

## 2023 Growth

Though it was less than 2022, the Town did see reasonable growth in 2023 with respect to residential development. Up to the end of November 2023, 21 new permits were issued for residential dwellings, compared to 27 in 2022. 4 new permits were issued for new commercial developments in 2023, versus 5 commercial permits being issued in 2022.







Many residents and businesses continued to proceed with improvements and expansions to their properties. The Town did continue to see many permits for other types of renovations. Including the 21 new residential dwellings, residential renovations, accessory buildings and subsidiary apartments, there were a total of 218 permits issued for a value of \$6,932,739.

Commercially there were 28 permits issued which included the 4 new buildings, and 24 building extensions, accessory buildings and renovations for a total increased value of \$2,916,386.

**2024 Expense Increases**

As was the situation in 2023, inflation, interest and investment has played an enormous role in the increase of many Town expenses.

As costs have continued to rise, inflation has had a significant financial impact on the 2024 operating budget. Increased costs for labour, fuel, materials, supplies and other services accounted for much of the increase over 2023.

Again in 2024, Council will continue to pay higher interest rates than those

of pre-2023. Unfortunately, interest costs have not begun to decline as previously expected and therefore will continue to create a significant financial commitment for the Town in 2024. These rates result in a diversion of revenue that could be put toward programs and services.

In addition to road/bridge maintenance and construction, the budget process allowed for discussions to address some much-needed equipment and other expenditures required to advance and maintain the service levels of the Town. Some of these items budgeted for 2024 include:

- Continued Pest Control measures
- Sidewalk construction
- Town Hall and EEC software upgrades
- Work Truck (Public Works)
- Sweeper Truck
- Pick-up truck (Public Works)
- Emergency Generator
- Automated Waste Collection
- Pilot project – Waste-water monitoring
- Lift station upgrades
- Wayfinding, Marketing and Attraction Strategy
- Winter Expo
- Community Housing Needs Assessment
- Arts Initiative
- Zero turn lawn mower
- Bike racks
- ATV dump cart for trail work
- Soccer net replacement
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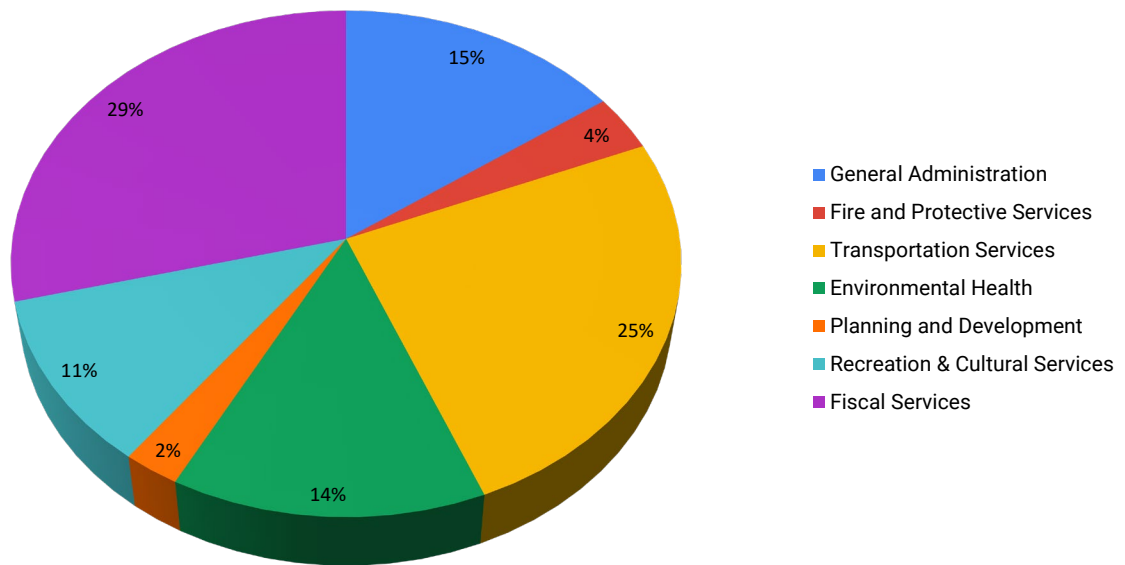
## **The 2024 Budget - Planned Operating Expenditures**

Clarendville classifies its annual operating expenditures into seven departmental categories. These categories include:

1. General Administration – The administrative costs associated with running the Town
2. Fire and Protective Services - The Clarenville Fire Department and Enforcement
3. Transportation Services - Infrastructure & Public Works
4. Environmental Health - Water and Waste
5. Planning and Development - All Planning and Community/Economic Development
6. Recreation and Cultural Services - Arts and Recreation
7. Fiscal Services - Financials/Borrowing Costs

<b>Town of Clarenville</b>				
<b>Expenditures (Thousands of Dollars)</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>
General Administration	\$1,881.53	15.16%	\$1,718.88	15.07%
Fire and Protective Services	\$444.19	3.58%	\$437.92	3.84%
Transportation Services	\$3,118.24	25.12%	\$3,000.91	26.31%
Environmental Health	\$1,723.69	13.89%	\$1,596.62	14.00%
Planning and Development	\$311.35	2.51%	\$260.50	2.28%
Recreation & Cultural Services	\$1,342.41	10.81%	\$1,288.07	11.29%
Fiscal Services	\$3,591.29	28.93%	\$3,104.93	27.22%
<b>Total Planned Expenditures</b>	<b>\$12,412.70</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$11,407.83</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Increase (Decrease) over previous year</b>	<b>8.81%</b>			

**2024 Clarenville Planned Expenditures**



## **General Administration**

The general administration budget will see an increase of just over 9.5%. This increase is mainly due to inflationary changes over the 2023 budget, along with additional funds being invested for software improvements to include an employee portal. The additional employee software module will improve human resource management as well as improve the efficiency of payroll processing functions. Some increases in the General Administration Budget also include funds that were reclassified from the Community Development Budget.

Through this Budget, there are provisions for community grants to various non-profit organizations that offer valuable contributions within our community. Again this year the Town will continue to support the Alpine Development Alliance Corporation, Random Age-Friendly (Crest Bus), the Heritage Society and many other non-profit organizations.

## **Fire and Protective Services**

The Clarendville Fire Department and Enforcement Budget will see an increase of approximately 1.4% in 2024. Also in this department, this is the result of an increase due mostly to inflation. This Budget provides for annual purchases to ensure that fire-fighting tools and safety equipment are replaced regularly. The Town's volunteer fire department provides such a valuable service to our residents and therefore Council would like to express sincere gratitude for the work that they do. One of the main objectives in 2024 is to seek funding for improvements to the Town's Emergency Operations Centre by purchasing a new emergency generator for the Fire Hall. In the event that funding cannot be obtained this year, Council has included a loan to purchase a new emergency generator.



### Transportation Services

The Town’s transportation budget, which includes public works operations, street lighting and snow removal, will see an increase of approximately 3.9%. This increase is due to inflationary costs for materials and services.



## **Environmental Health**

The environmental health department, which includes water and sewer operations, chemical supplies and waste management, will see an increase of 8%. This increase is attributable to additional costs to implement automated waste collection within the Town. Throughout the year the Town will purchase garbage bins suitable for automated waste collection. A portion of this cost will be incurred this year and the remaining cost has been included as a loan for the purchase. This Budget also has increased costs for waste-water monitoring which will be outlined later in this document.



## **Planning and Development**

The Planning and Development department, which includes Beautification/Environmental and Community Development and Communications, will see an increase of 19.5%. This is attributable to funds being allocated to leverage support for various economic tourism strategic projects as outlined in the Economic Development section. It also includes the continuation of doctor retention grants to attract and retain physicians for the area.



## Recreation and Cultural Services

Overall the expenses for this department have increased by just over 4% mainly due to inflationary costs. Additional changes to recreation are of a capital nature and will be addressed throughout the report. This Budget also includes the funds for parks and playgrounds.



## **Fiscal Services**

This department, which includes the Town's loan payments, debt charges, and also funding for the Town's own Capital Works program, will have an increase of approximately 15.75% compared to last year. Much of this is due to the increase in interest costs for borrowing. It also reflects additions to the cost of capital investment throughout the various departments. 2024 will see an increase of principal payments, mainly due to borrowing for the Shoal Harbour Causeway and the completion of work for the most recent Multi Year Capital Works Program. New borrowed items announced in this year's Budget will not have principal payments in 2024. The Town continues to use cost-saving initiatives through products that are available for borrowing, however, due to continued higher interest rates, there has been a considerable increase in this Budget. Projections do show that this should start to decline again in late 2024.

## **2024 Town Projects**

### **Capital Projects Budget**



### **Roads and Sidewalks**

Mr. Mayor, I am pleased to announce again this year that the Town has provided funding in the Budget in the amount of \$550,000 for the Road/Sidewalk Improvement Program. This is to improve local roads and



sidewalks and is in addition to the Town's portion of any Government related road funding.

In 2023, the Town was approved for the 3-Year Capital Works Program in the amount of \$5,232,544 with a contribution by the Town of approximately \$1,105,440. Through this program, the Town will see a complete restoration of the water, sewer and road for Huntley Drive, a portion of Tilley's Road from Crewe Place to the Trans Canada Highway, restoration of the Lower Shoal Harbour Bridge, water plant upgrades as well as investment into waste-water improvements. Approximately half of this work will be completed in 2024 and the remainder for 2025. The Town has budgeted for its portion of this project as a loan, however this will create a minimal impact financially as there will be no payment for this loan in 2024. This will be a great addition to the recent capital infusion for the community.

The Town will also receive its annual Canada Community Building Funding in the amount of \$296,706. This funding will also be used to carry out local infrastructure and asset management improvements. The remaining funds from the 2023-2024 CCBF have also been requested for 2024 improvements to Thistle Place.

### **Equipment - Public Works**

Council will also borrow for the purchase of the following equipment for public works:

- Sweeper truck in the approximate amount of \$400,000
- Work truck - \$125,000
- Pickup truck- \$70,000
- Lift station upgrades - \$100,000

### **Emergency Operations Centre Upgrades**

This Budget will see provisions for a loan in the amount of \$138,000 for an EOC emergency generator. Due to the impacts of climate change the Town would like to ensure that the EOC is able to operate effectively in the event of a prolonged power outage.

## **Waste-Water Monitoring**

Due to Federal Government Regulations the Town, for several years now, has been required to monitor four sewer outfalls at a cost of approximately \$45,000 per year. This service for monitoring the data and providing equipment has been sub-contracted. In 2024 the Town will purchase equipment for the monitoring of one sewer outfall as a pilot program to determine if this may be the most cost- effective route for the future.

## **Waste Collection**

Over the past couple of years the Town has been pursuing information to proceed with an automated multi-stream waste collection service. In October of 2023 a tender was issued and later awarded to Vardy Villa. This service throughout 2024 will see the Town purchase pre-numbered garbage bins that are suitable for automated collection. These bins will be distributed to each residential housing unit with its unique bin number to remain with that property. The costs to provide bins is approximately \$365,000. This topic will be further discussed in the revenue section of this document.

## **Equipment - Recreation**

In Recreation, funds will be provided for an engineering assessment of the Eastlink Events Centre in the approximate amount of \$60,000. This will allow the Recreation Department to better address humidity issues and mechanical deficiencies in a more efficient and effective manner.

Funds have been also allocated for various small investments in office improvements, ticketing, refrigeration and yard fencing for the Eastlink Events Centre.

Recreational improvements of approximately \$46,000 will also take place for many items including;

- a zero turn lawn mower
- bike racks
- a commercial dump cart for trail work
- soccer net replacement

- repairs at the Soccer Hut
- Elizabeth Swan Park softball field fencing
- Repainting of lines on outdoor track
- Winter/Christmas display for Elizabeth Swan Park
- Automatic door mechanism for the Bill Davis Chalet



## Economic Development

In 2024, plans are underway to host a Winter Expo which we have titled **Trails, Tracks and Tunes**. This festival is made possible through a cost-shared funding arrangement between the Town (\$18,300) and ACOA (\$51,700). Similarly, the Town plans to host Wheels and Heels Fall Festival again next year which we hope will be bigger and better.

Becoming a Tourism Destination can be a daunting task unless you approach it methodically and with support from tourism operators and funding from the Federal and Provincial Government. It has been said that the Clarendville Area has lots of points of interests that visitors enjoy. Our greatest challenge has been telling the story. Through the support of ACOA and the Dept. of Industry, Energy and technology, the Town will receive

funding in the amount of \$209,000 towards the implementation of a **Wayfinding, Marketing and Attraction Strategy**. This funding will assist us in developing a wayfinding and interpretive signage program, enhance our gateway signs on the TCH, develop a Destination Clarendville and Area website and produce a video series that promotes our programs, services, amenities, and local businesses.

Housing availability and affordability is of significant concern to Council, especially for the business community, our small and medium sized enterprises, and many of our social support agencies. Recognizing how important this issue is to help the town grow, we have partnered with Newfoundland Labrador Housing Corporation to cost share \$57,500 for a **Community Housing Needs Assessment**. While this work began in 2023, the new Community Needs Assessment will not be finalized until the summer, 2024.

Building a new **Strategic Economic Plan** will guide the priorities that we need to undertake to help support local business growth and to encourage community development. Earlier this year, through the support of the Town's Economic Development Officer, and the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology, we undertook a process to build a new Plan. We are pleased to see the high level of engagement from our residents and business community throughout the engagement process. Early in 2024, we aim to release the Economic Plan which will guide our priorities investments for the next 5-years.

White Hills Ski Resort has long been an attraction to visitors to the Clarendville Area. But the Resort has aging infrastructure that requires updating through strategic investment. Recently, the Alpine Development Alliance Corporation, an independent Board of Directors which manages the Resort, received more than \$1.5 million in funding to assist with modernizing the ski facility. In 2024, to help foster the sustainability of the Resort, the Town will seek funding for a **White Hills Sustainability Plan**.

Promoting the Town requires investment if we are to attract new business opportunities and more people to consider this community as a place to call home. Part of this **Marketing and Promotion Strategy** is to showcase the abundance of amenities and attractions that we offer to our residents. In September, we took a chance and put our first Clarendville Trade Booth in

the Placentia Bay Industrial Show Case. The investment paid off with more than 50 new contacts ranging from businesses which are either looking to expand into the Clarenville Area or those that have already established a new store front and wish to become better connected. In 2024, the Town will continue to invest \$9,750 towards promoting this community as a great place to do business.

Throughout this year, we have heard from local artists which are seeking support of the Town to assist with their growth potential. We know that Clarenville has a vibrant arts community which is comprised of art in many forms. In 2024, we will invest \$5,000 into a new **Community Art Procurement Program** which will serve to engage local artists as they help us tell our story thus promoting the rich culture and history of this community. Furthermore, the Town will invest another \$5,000 in storyboards which aim to re-tell the history of the community and attract visitors to this area. This investment will also support a re-development of the former Farmer's Market on Marine Drive, a multi-year initiative which will improve the downtown area and create Clarenville as a more walkable community.

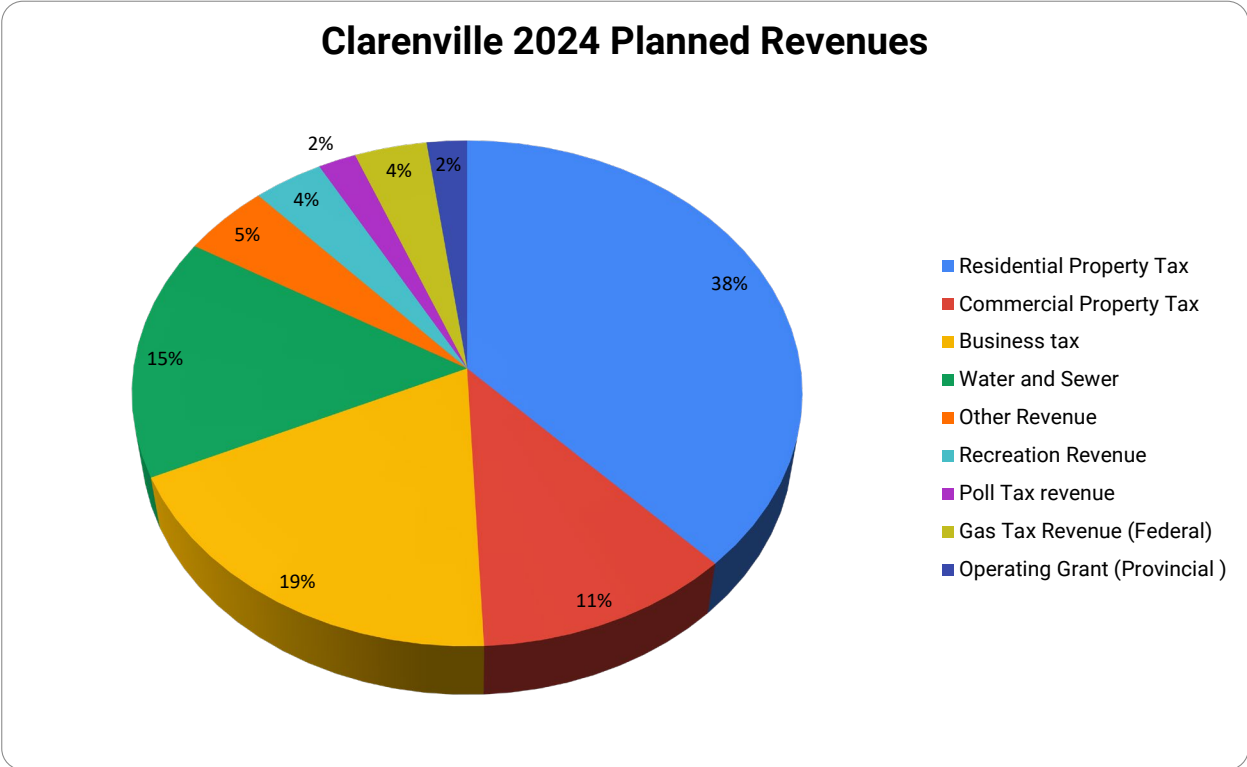
This, Mr. Mayor, represents our plans for the expense side of the Budget.

Now for the revenue side.

### **2024 Budget - Planned Revenues**

Mr. Mayor, the projected revenues required for this budget are \$12,412,707 an increase of 8.81% from the 2023 budget. Clarenville's two major sources of revenue come from Residential and Commercial taxation. I will now elaborate on these:

<b>Town of Clarendville</b>				
Revenue (Thousands of Dollars)	2024		2023	
Residential Property Tax	\$4,701.60	37.88%	\$4,263.34	37.37%
Commercial Property Tax	\$1,414.35	11.39%	\$1,354.10	11.87%
Business tax	\$2,341.30	18.86%	\$2,271.40	19.91%
Water and Sewer	\$1,916.60	15.44%	\$1,896.98	16.63%
Other Revenue	\$583.50	4.70%	\$370.30	3.25%
Recreation Revenue	\$462.70	3.73%	\$436.90	3.83%
Poll Tax revenue	\$250.00	2.01%	\$225.55	1.98%
Gas Tax Revenue (Federal)	\$477.50	3.85%	\$356.00	3.12%
Operating Grant (Provincial )	\$265.15	2.14%	\$233.26	2.04%
<b>Total Planned Revenue</b>	<b>\$12,412.70</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$11,407.83</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Increase (Decrease) over previous year	8.81%		9.41%	



### Residential Taxes

Mr. Mayor, this year the 8.3 mills residential tax rate in Clarendville will not increase. Water and sewer fees for residential users will also not be impacted for 2024 and will remain at \$385 per household unit.

Taxation is tied to property values that are provided to Towns by the

Municipal Assessment Agency. Clarendville, along with some other medium-sized communities, did see an increase in residential property assessments in 2024. For many taxpayers, depending on the size of the increase in assessment, this will mean an increase in taxation, though there is no mill rate increase.

I would like to reiterate that, as a Council, we are committed to a continued & concerted effort to further build our community while getting the best possible value for our tax dollars and emphasizing affordability as this past couple of years has been so difficult on so many. Council and staff have focused their efforts on cost savings to ensure that residents can benefit from the same services.

## **Commercial Taxes**

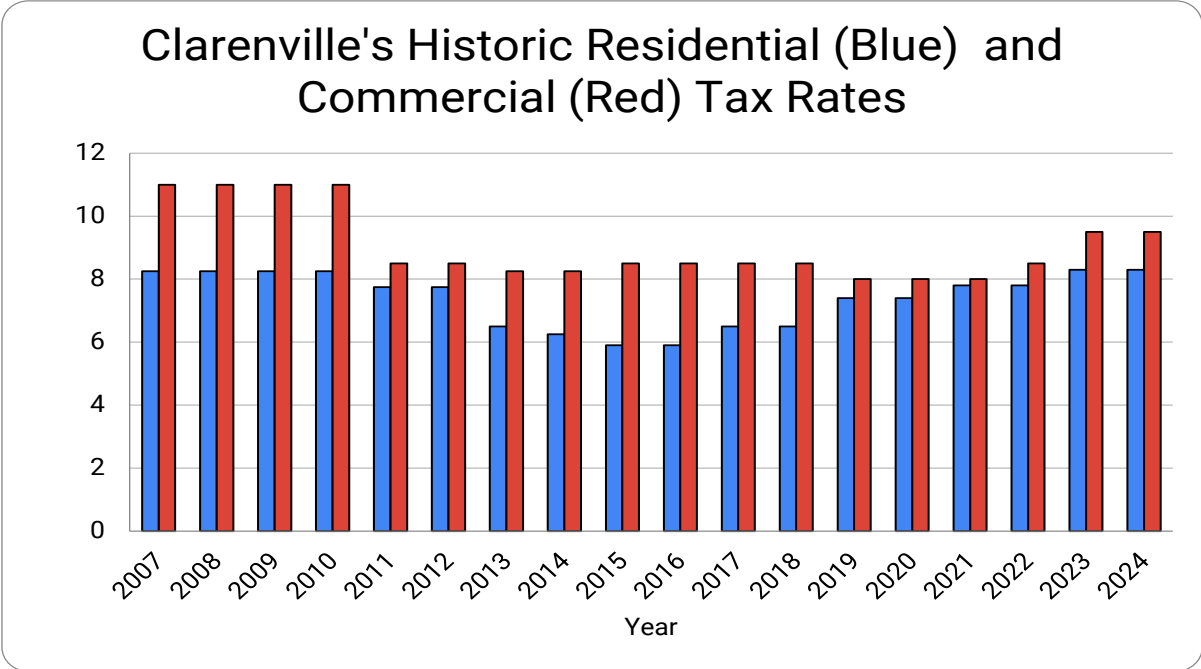
The business community is a key contributor to Clarendville's tax base.

As previously mentioned in the expenditure highlights, we continue to work with our business community and are taking steps to assist and grow our business sector through investment in economic development, recreational activities and other tourism initiatives. Continuous investments in communications, promotion and economic development are positive steps in highlighting the business potential of our town.

Mr. Mayor, this year the mill rate for the commercial property tax will remain unchanged at 9.5 mills. Commercial assessed values have had very little change and therefore this may mean that some businesses may see a small increase/decrease or remain the same.

The business tax mill rates will also remain the same as 2023 rates and can be found in the attached tax structure. The Town is pleased to offer business tax mill rates that are comparable to those of other similar sized Towns in the Province.

Commercial water and sewer rates for 2024 will also remain consistent with those of 2023 with a \$360 base rate plus 3 mills of assessed value.



**Waste Collection – Environmental Fees**

As noted in the expenditure side of the Budget, the Town will be pursuing the implementation of the automated multi-stream waste collection service. This will require that pre-numbered garbage bins, that are suitable for automated collection, be distributed to each residential housing unit. To allow for additional costs for automated multi-stream waste collection, the Town has implemented an annual \$25 environmental fee to be applied to each household unit.

**Recreational Fees**

Appreciating that the cost of providing town services has risen, the Town will implement a small increase in recreation fees in 2024. The new fee structure and its effective timelines will be outlined in the Town’s Recreational fee schedule policy.

**Other Financial Consideration**

Finally, Mr. Mayor, we recognize that there are people who do not own property in the community that are charged a usage tax known as Poll tax. Although we would like to eliminate this tax, it does contribute



approximately a quarter of a million dollars a year to the town to help provide services that we all benefit from. There will not be an increase in Poll tax in 2024 and Council is committed to discussions to move forward with a phase out plan to eliminate the poll tax. New Municipal Legislation now provides for the elimination of poll tax over a three-year period.

Additionally, to ease the burden of taxation for low-income property owners, we will continue to offer low-income tax reductions for those who qualify as follows:

<b>Annual Income</b>	<b>Reduction</b>
<b>0.00 - \$25,000</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>\$25,001 - \$28,000</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>\$28,001 - \$30,000</b>	<b>20%</b>

### **A View to 2024 and Beyond**

Looking forward, this budget is a commitment to continued investment in Clarendville by improving community involvement and infrastructure, as well as partnering with the business sector and government to ensure continued infusion of economic development to benefit residents, companies and other organizations.

This Budget Mr. Mayor, we believe, is a budget that balances municipal spending during inflationary times with planning for continued growth as a Town.

Last but not least Mr. Mayor, I am very pleased to report that this Budget leaves us with a Debt Ratio of less than 18%, which is well under the 30% threshold permitted by the Provincial Government. This provides us with a sound financial foundation to take our Town into the future.

This low debt ratio will certainly keep us in good standing with the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and will give us the ability to borrow money should the need arise for any emergencies that may occur.

**Recommendation:**

Be it resolved that the Municipality of Clarendville accepts the balanced budget tabled for the fiscal year 2024 in the amount of \$12,412,707 and that this document be submitted to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs for review and acceptance.