



Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

■ BY JEFF ROGERS

Spring is in the air and the warmer weather is finally back.

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those who attended our 40th in-person training seminar. It was so good to catch up and see everyone again. We had 227 delegates attend the seminar and 57 supplier booths in the trade show. Thank you to all the presenters for donating their time to us and the sponsors of the seminar. You are what makes the seminar what it is and increase our members' experience at the seminar.

This year we had two operators win the Operational Excellence Award: Marty Mallinson from the Municipality of Argyle and Greg Jay of the Town of Souris. Congratulations to you both and thank you for all you do.

The highlight of the seminar was the attendance of founding member Jim Shaffner along with his wife, Carol, and daughter, Jennifer. They took in the seminar festivities. Jim was very pleased to see the success and growth of the association that he and others started in 1979.

Next year's training seminar will be held in Saint John at the Hilton hotel, April 14 to 17. Mark it on your calendars. Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Woodstock's \$4-million second well may be unusable

■ BY JIM DUMVILLE
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

After more than seven years and over \$4 million spent, Woodstock's long-awaited second well might need years and millions more.

After hearing the town's crucial new drinking water source is unusable, at least beyond short-term emergency use, a frustrated mayor and council demanded answers and solutions.

Chief administrative officer (CAO) Andrew Garnett explained the problems publicly for the first time at the March 28 council meeting.

Mayor Trina Jones said council was fully briefed only the week prior about the significant long-term issues with the new well.

She explained representatives with Dillon Consulting brought the severe problems to her attention only recently during a meeting she requested with the CAO, director of Public Works and Utility Greg Stokes, and director of Finance Kristen Pelkey.

Jones explained the well, expected to come online months ago, can't be used today and possibly not for the foreseeable future.

She called it "beyond disappointing" to learn the town can't use an eight-year project costing millions of dollars.

Garnett outlined the history of the well project, noting a spring flood in 2014, which washed away the causeway and power lines leading to the town's only water source on an island in the St. John River, crystalized the vital need for a backup well.



Woodstock CAO Andrew Garnett

While town and NB Power crews quickly restored the causeway and power lines, the situation would have been dire if the ice flow had damaged the waterline.

After years of searching for a second water source, the town identified a site on Shore Road in Grafton.

Garnett explained that the current problem involves the baseline for water tests, noting today's test results are not the same as the original tests. He also said the planned use of the Grafton well has changed since construction began. Intended initially as a backup, the town's increasing water demands meant it became more than a backup well.

While manganese is a long-running problem in Woodstock water, Garnett said salinity levels are the most significant issue at the new well. He said those levels increased significantly since the first tests.



Woodstock Mayor Trina Jones

Garnett said the town was prepared to look at a treatment plan for manganese if needed, but salinity levels came as a surprise.

"The bottom line is, as of now, we can only use that well on an emergency basis and for the short term," he said.

Garnett said the issue now is finding a way to fix the problem.

He said Dillon is developing a double-focused report for council addressing funding options to cover a detailed study of the well and finding the methods and cost of fixing it.

The CAO expressed confidence the Regional Development Corporation funds would be available for the study. Once the study identifies a remedy for the problems, the town must determine the cost and what federal and provincial programs are available.

Continued on page 3

Member profile	2	ADDRESS LABEL HERE	Publication No. 40064799
Woodstock rate increase	3		
Salem water project approval	4		
Cumberland County funding	5		
St. Stephen well issues	6		
Queens infrastructure upgrade ...	7		
Lunenburg upgrades funded	8		
Rothsay cost increase	9		

MEMBER PROFILE:

Jay proud of new wastewater treatment plant upgrades

Operator name: Greg Jay
Operator title/position:
Maintenance supervisor

Q. WHERE DO YOU WORK?
A. Town of Souris, P.E.I.

Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED IN THE INDUSTRY?
A. Seventeen years.

Q. WHEN DID YOU JOIN MPWWA AND WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A MEMBER?
A. I believe it was in 2007. The advantages of being a member of MPWWA are being kept up to date on training and what is new in the industry.

Q. WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN YOUR JOB?
A. I'd have to say keeping everything and everyone organized throughout the year with the changing of seasons.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?
A. My favourite part of the job is doing repairs and new installations of the water distribution and sewer collection system.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?
A. My least favourite part of the job is having to disconnect customers for non-payment.

Q. HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INVOLVED IN THE INDUSTRY?
A. I first became involved in the industry working for a contractor that did large upgrades and new installations for different municipalities. When the position came up with the Town of Souris, I felt it was a great fit for me.

Q. WHAT'S THE LEAST UNDERSTOOD PART OF YOUR JOB? WHAT ELSE SHOULD THE PUBLIC KNOW ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?
A. Most people don't realize what you are doing behind the scenes to keep everything running efficiently and safely. Keeping everything running without interruptions to the public is very important.

Q. WHAT'S SOMETHING EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU?
A. Everyone knows that I enjoy my work and enjoy making everything look great.

Q. WHAT'S SOMETHING ALMOST NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU?
A. That I enjoy working on antique tractors for a hobby.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT?
A. I would have to say all the time and research spent to improve our new wastewater treatment plant. Getting this project completed took many years and I'm very happy that the SBR is working beautifully and is by far meeting all requirements to keep our environment safe for everyone.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT?
A. My family. I'm a husband, a father of three, and a grandfather of two. These people bring great joy to my life.

Q. WHAT'S YOUR BEST ADVICE TO A FELLOW INDUSTRY MEMBER, OR SOMEONE LOOKING TO JOIN THE INDUSTRY?
A. Don't be scared to ask questions. All the maps and documentation will never out trump the knowledge and experience of the operators that have been working in any particular municipality. Ask the



Greg Jay is the Town of Souris' maintenance supervisor. (Submitted photo)

questions, most are only happy to share what they know and what they have learned. Most importantly, what's under the ground.

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Cost of water going up in Woodstock

■ BY JIM DUMVILLE

LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Woodstock residents who use public water and sewer will see higher costs and a new system when their 2023 bills arrive this summer.

With a seven-to-one vote at the April 11 meeting, council approved the town's water-billing purview committee recommendation to overhaul the billing system and increase the rates significantly.

Mayor Trina Jones said the town needs increased revenue to maintain and improve the deteriorating and long "underfunded" water and sewer system.

Noting Woodstock utility rates remained basically unchanged for decades, the mayor said the town fell behind in its needed upgrades.

"There is nothing in life today that is the same cost that it was 20 years ago," she said.

During the discussion, Deputy Mayor Mark Rogers stressed that council's decision is not related to recent news of million-dollar problems with the town's planned second well.

"This process started long before those problems," he said. "It has absolutely nothing to do with the well. That money has to come from somewhere else."

Jeff Bradbury was the only councillor to vote against accepting the committee recommendation, although he said he understood the decision and the need for a significant boost in utility revenue.

While praising the committee's efforts, Bradbury expressed hope for public consultation before moving forward.

"I just hope the residents understand what we're trying to do here and that we have plans out there," he said. "Because it's a huge hike."

The mayor agreed the hike is significant but noted approval allows the process to move forward to the bylaw amendment stage, where council could still make changes.

The committee recommendation, which is available in full on the Town of Woodstock website, outlines four billing options: single flat-rate billing, tiered flat-rate billing, metered billing with smart reading and metered billing.

Coun. Julie Calhoun-Williams, who sat on the water-billing committee, explained the decision to recommend the



Town of Woodstock residents who use public water and sewer will see higher costs and a new system when their 2023 bills arrive this summer.

(Unsplash photo)

four-tiered flat-rate billing.

"After careful review of the costs of administering water services, current and future infrastructure cost needs, and the necessity to move forward quickly, the committee is recommending that we accept a two-prong approach," she said.

She said the committee opted for the multi-tier flat-rate approach over the next two to three years while the town studied the "solution, costs and funding for a smart-metered system."

Following the meeting, Calhoun-Williams and Mayor Jones noted the smart-meter approach would base all billing on consumption and promote water conservation but would mean high upfront costs for the town.

Calhoun-Williams explained the tiered residential rates divide more than 1,000 customers into tiers based on historical consumption.

- Tier 1 flat rate: \$550 per year, involving customers currently paying \$450 or below.

- Tier 2 flat rate: \$725 annual fee, involving customers currently paying be-

tween \$451 and \$600.

- Tier 3 flat rate: \$825 annual fee, involving customers currently paying between \$601 and \$750.

- Tier 4 flat rate: \$925 annual fee, involving customers currently paying over \$751.

The committee recommends billing those without a historical consumption rate, such as new dwellings, or new owners at the Tier 2 level.

The committee estimated the residential billing alone would provide an additional \$200,000 in revenue.

The committee recommendation calls for billing multi-unit dwellings at \$350 per unit per year and low-consumption commercial buildings at a \$550 per year flat rate.

The committee also recommended a 15 per cent discount for approved low and fixed-income residents.

Woodstock director of Finance Kristin Pelkey estimated the town would deliver the 2023 water and sewer bills in June after council completes and approves the required bylaw amendments.

She explained the bills would encompass the entire year, from Jan. 1 to Dec. 21, 2023.

Pelkey said the bills would be payable in full, but residents could opt for an equalized-billing option through the online portal on the town's website.

While online payments are the town's preferred option, she said those without access or the ability to use a computer could make arrangements with town staff for other payment options.

During council discussion, Pelkey explained the town's last water billing occurred in late September or October, leaving the final four months of 2022 unbilled as the town awaited council's billing decision.

She said the town would not bill for the last four months of 2022.

Despite the significant hikes in water and sewer bills, Jones said Woodstock residents are still getting a fair deal.

She said only 30 per cent of the expanded Woodstock population uses the public water and sewer system. On average, she added, users pay approximately \$1.50 daily for one of their most essential services.

Even with the significantly higher rates, Jones said Woodstock remains average or below average with most New Brunswick communities.

River Valley Sun

Woodstock's \$4-million second well may be unusable

Continued from page 1

Garnett said the most critical aspect of Dillon's report is identifying the problem and finding how to fix it.

"That's a little worrisome. How much is it going to cost us," the CAO said.

Whatever the cost, it will add to the more than \$4.1 million already spent to bring the new well online.

Pelkey broke down the sources of the \$4.1 million, saying \$1.7 million came from provincial and federal programs, including the RDC and ICIP (Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program). The town contributed almost \$1.4 million and used more than \$1 million of gas tax funds.

Coun. Jeff Bradbury said he wants answers as to why the town finds itself in its current position. He and the mayor both stated they want to review all tests.

"Some questions have to be answered," he said, noting three levels of government paid millions of dollars on a project that may not be usable.

Bradbury stressed the seriousness of the current dilemma.

"Water is the most important part of any municipality," he said. "Even more than the police. Without water, you're shut down."

Coun. Mike Martin noted the growing demands of the town's main well.

"When are we maxed?" he asked.

Garnett said that could potentially happen, but he could not provide a timeline.

The CAO agreed the town might have to consider soon building another water tower to reduce pressure on the water infrastructure.

Jones said solving the problem will cost time and money, noting it could reach millions and take two or three years, especially if the town is forced to amend environmental agreements.

She added the costs of bringing the Grafton well online might force the town back to square one.

Jones said Ward 4, the former town of Woodstock, still bears most of the utility costs but noted money might be used from funding programs that could be directed to other wards.

River Valley Sun



Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater

REPORT

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County council approves Salem water project

■ BY RAISSA TETANISH

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Residents in Salem can look forward to quality water in the near future.

The Municipality of Pictou County council unanimously passed a motion at its property services meeting this month to fund just the water portion of the Salem Loop water and wastewater project. The motion, which Warden Robert Parker made, will see the municipality use its federal gas tax reserves to fund the project.

“That community is very upset because they’re getting the brunt end of things here through no fault of theirs,” said the warden before making the motion. “They expected this project to go through like many others we approve here, then we go spend our money on design and whatnot, which we did for \$60,000, with no reason to believe it wasn’t going to be approved.”

During the February property services meeting, Warden Parker spoke about the province denying the municipality’s request for funding for the project. The municipality had applied through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Green Stream. Without provincial approval, the project wouldn’t see

federal assistance. The entire project, which would see water and wastewater lines extended for about two kilometres, was originally budgeted around \$5 million, however costs had increased to more than \$6 million.

Thirty homes in the area were to benefit.

“We do have the current Salem water cost estimate there of about \$2.7 million when we include the net HST,” chief administrative officer (CAO) Brian Cullen told those at this recent meeting. At the February meeting, council approved a motion directing staff to look into the feasibility of the municipality funding the water portion.

Cullen said there were essentially three options for council to consider – gas tax reserve, general operating reserve or debt finance.

Staff’s recommendation to council, should they wish to proceed, was to fund the project through the federal gas tax reserve, which has almost \$4.3 million.

The CAO explained other government-funded projects, such as the \$34 million received from the federal government for the high-speed internet project, wouldn’t be able to use gas tax reserves if additional funds were needed.

“Federal streams do not allow us to



Municipality of Pictou County Warden Robert Parker

stack grants,” Cullen explained.

The warden said if the municipality were to fund the entire water and waste-

water project, it would deplete the municipality’s funds.

“I think we’re at a point where there’s no way this council on its own can do the water and wastewater. It’s too big a bill,” he said.

“But I think it is possible with the figures the CAO gave us tonight that we could fund the water part of the project and at least not lose all the money we put into designing this project.”

Coun. Andy Thompson had asked if the municipality had done a proper survey with residents outlining the costs of the project, as well as costs of residents having municipal water.

Cullen said a resident went door-to-door with costs the municipality provided, such as operating costs, quarterly base and usage charges, as well as a hydrant charge. Warden Parker said more than 90 per cent were in favour of the water project three years ago and only about 65 to 70 were in favour of the wastewater aspect.

“Shouldn’t we go back to those residents now to confirm?” asked Thompson. “Shouldn’t it be a municipally run survey, a standard survey? It should be a standard form, it shouldn’t be done by a private resident. We see the interest, so now let’s confirm it for ourselves.”

Stewiacke to receive major wastewater upgrade

■ BY ANDY WALKER

The Town of Stewiacke is receiving a \$6.2-million upgrade to its water and wastewater infrastructure.

The funding, announced recently by the three levels of government, will see the replacement of 3.7 kilometres of water, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure on three streets in Stewiacke: Riverside Avenue, Lewis Street and Pleasant Hill. These upgrades will help expand the system’s capacity and connect more houses to the municipal drinking water system.

“The Town of Stewiacke is so grateful for the ICIP funding, which will address our number one strategic plan initiative,” said Mayor George Lloy. “Many thanks are extended to the federal and provincial governments as well as our staff, which have dedicated a tremendous time over many months to help make this a profound and positive reality.”

The Government of Canada is spending more than \$2.4 million toward the project. The Nova Scotia government is providing more than \$2 million and the Town of Stewiacke will contribute more than \$1.6 million. The federal funding comes from the Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

A safer, more efficient and more reliable water and wastewater system will ensure the Town of Stewiacke remains a great place to live.

“Communities thrive when they have access to modern and reliable infrastructure,” said Sean Fraser, minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and MP for Central Nova, on behalf of the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities. “The upgrades to water, wastewater and stormwater systems in Stewiacke will support the health and safety of residents and businesses, while creating local jobs and setting up the community for long-term sustainable growth.”

Fraser says the federal government will continue working with partners across the country to support thriving rural communities.

Larry Harrison, MLA for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley, announced the provincial funding on behalf of John Lohr, minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

“We want our communities to thrive and having access to modern infrastructure builds stronger communities,” said Harrison. “These upgrades will ensure higher quality and more reliable municipal water and wastewater services for residents.”

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Major water and wastewater upgrade planned for Cumberland County

■ BY ANDY WALKER

A major upgrade is in the works for the water and wastewater system in Cumberland County.

Officials from the three levels of government recently unveiled the \$6.4-million plan that will see work carried out in two locations.

The municipality will install a stormwater system on Junction Road in Springhill, from Lisgar Street to Main Street. Curbs and gutters will replace existing ditches, and they will build a new storm water outlet. In addition, the project will replace the existing sanitary sewer, which will eliminate stormwater from the sanitary system. The project will also see the existing water distribution infrastructure replaced.

“Junction Road has been an issue in Springhill for every council for decades,” said Municipality of Cumberland County Mayor Murray Scott. “I have pictures of that road being laid in the 1930s and there’s 100-year-old infrastructure under that road in need of replacement.”

At the second location, along Athol Road from the Athol Road and McGee Street intersection, the municipality will replace 800 metres of aging water distribution line. As well, the project will replace 125 metres of water line along Beaton Lane, extending off Athol Road.

Scott says the announcement is big news for the area.

“We’ve had decades and decades of attempts with just patch work on Junction Road and the Athol Road. This is a complete overhaul and what needs to be done to do it properly,” said the mayor.

“These two projects are going to benefit tourism, business and the local community as well as emergency response. These are major projects for us and they are really going to impact the community.”

He said the municipality wouldn’t be able to undertake the two projects without the provincial and federal assistance.

Kings-Hants MP Kody Blois, who announced the federal portion of the funding on behalf of Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc, said the work will help contribute to a growing muni-



The Municipality of Cumberland County is undertaking two wastewater projects in the Springhill area thanks to funding contributions from the federal and provincial governments. On hand for the recent announcement were, from left, Municipality of Cumberland Deputy Mayor Mark Joseph, Mayor Murray Scott, Kings-Hants MP Kody Blois, Cumberland South MLA and Natural Resources and Renewables Minister Tory Rushton, and Municipality of Cumberland District 5 Coun. Angel McCormick.

(Submitted photo)

pality. He praised the partnership with the three levels of government that made the project a reality.

“Modern and efficient water and wastewater infrastructure is key to building healthy communities,” added Tory Rushton, minister of Natural Resources and Renewables and MLA for Cumberland South, on behalf of the Honourable John Lohr, minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “This investment will help meet long-

term development and water demands for the people of Cumberland County.”

The Government of Canada is providing more than \$2.5 million for this project through the Green Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The Nova Scotia government is contributing more than \$2.1 million toward the project, while the Municipality of Cumberland is providing more than \$1.7 million.

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St. Stephen to request provincial help with water well repairs

■ BY ROBERT FISHER

A collapsed pipe was the main cause of recent turbidity issues for a well serving residents in St. Stephen, N.B.

While the cost is still unknown, it's expected the municipality will seek provincial funding to assist with the repairs.

Chief administrative officer Jeff Renaud has been in contact with engineers about the repairs, however a final report with estimated costs is not yet complete.

The original well is more than a century old. Approximately 60 years ago, the town drilled a secondary well roughly 60 metres from the original, with a 45-centimetre perforated pipe connection. The town drilled the second well to improve water supply.

Increased turbidity in the water on March 15 triggered an alarm, which resulted in a boil water order. The turbidity, or cloudiness, returned to acceptable levels, however levels increased again on March 19, extending the boil order.

The municipality consulted an engineering team and a submersible remote-operated vehicle with a camera was put into the well to investigate. Gravel had entered the well through the hole drilled for the accessory well pipe, resulting in the suspension of fine particles of dirt and silt in the well water. Officials believe the pipe from the accessory well collapsed, which allowed gravel to spill into the primary well.

When the void from the pipe collapsed, additional gravel spilled into the well and triggered the second alarm. The collapse of the void space is currently sealing the hole.

Renaud said he's uncertain when the final report will be ready.

"We're going to be looking for assistance with repairs and/or other projects to create resiliency at the well site," he said, adding it's unlikely the municipality will seek emergency funding for the project.

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Major upgrade announced for water services in Queens Region

■ BY ANDY WALKER

A \$2.6-million upgrade has been announced for water and wastewater infrastructure in the Region of Queens Municipality.

The funding all three levels of government have committed to will be used to upgrade and replace water, sanitary and storm sewer lines, and decommissioning the existing combined sewer outfall in the Waterloo East sewer shed boundary. The project will also include a new wastewater pumping station, force main and storm sewer outfall. The storm water system will be designed to withstand 100-year storm water levels.

"I am very pleased that the Government of Canada and Province of Nova Scotia have recognized the importance of a healthy Liverpool Harbour with this significant funding announcement," said Mayor Darlene Norman. "With this financial support, Region of Queens Municipality will be able to replace and upgrade inadequate and outdated infrastructure that will help support our long-term community desire of a more environmentally responsible government and community."

Norman noted that when the project

is complete, it will improve both the reliability and capacity of the Region of Queens Municipality's drinking water system. It will also increase its capacity to treat and manage wastewater and storm water for years to come.

Following the announcement, the mayor said work should begin on the project in late spring or early summer.

"It's always good to get funding partnerships from both the Government of Canada and the province of Nova Scotia. When the town of Liverpool, like many other coastal towns in our country, when they built wastewater systems they built them with direct outfall into the marine environment," she told LighthouseNOW Progress Bulletin.

"This section of Liverpool has many homes that are still direct outfalling into Liverpool Bay, so this will correct those direct wastewater outfalls. It will separate the storm water and at the same time it will include new water lines and that will improve the reliability and the capacity of the drinking system."

Norman asked for patience from homeowners that live in the area, considering there is just one road to go in and out.

Halifax West MP Lena Metlege Diab, who announced the federal portion of the

funding on behalf of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities Minister Dominic LeBlanc, said, "This funding will ensure that Region of Queens Municipality will have reliable and clean drinking water, and that wastewater lines can withstand not only day-to-day use, but severe storms that affect our region."

The Government of Canada is providing \$1,046,800 through the Green Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The Government of Nova Scotia is contributing \$872,333. The Regional Municipality of Queens is providing \$697,867.

"Investing in our water and wastewater systems helps ensure the long-term health of the residents who call this area home," noted Kim Masland, minister of Public Works, on behalf of the Honourable John Lohr, minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

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Infrastructure funding announced for Lunenburg area

■ BY ANDY WALKER

A \$28.8-million total upgrade was recently announced for wastewater and active transportation infrastructure in the Town of Lunenburg and the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.

The area will receive a wastewater treatment plant upgrade to a sequencing batch reactor. The project will include replacement of mechanical and electrical equipment, adding a backup generator,

and converting the existing wastewater treatment plant process to a sequencing batch reactor. The federal government will be contributing \$3,993,200, with the province paying \$3,327,667 and the town contributing \$2,662,133.

“This crucial project is the largest and most important step toward modernizing the town’s wastewater system and supporting the town’s future growth and long-term viability through increased servicing capacity,” noted Mayor Matt

Risser. “The support provided by other levels of government to our residents is both welcomed and appreciated.”

The Cookville Wastewater Treatment Facility in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg will be upgraded to increase treatment capacity and accommodate future residential and commercial growth. The upgrades will provide capacity for approximately 800 new residential units and additional commercial buildings.

Ottawa will be contributing \$3,643,600, with the provincial government’s share being \$3,036,333 and the municipality putting in \$2,429,067.

“The funding to upgrade the Cookville wastewater treatment plant’s capacity will ensure the continued success and expansion of Osprey Village,” said Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, mayor of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg. “We are grateful to the Province of Nova Scotia and to Infrastructure Canada for their commitment to making these projects a reality.”

As well, funding was announced for the construction of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg’s Osprey Village Active Transportation Connector. This consists of a 1.2-kilometre active transportation multi-use pathway, a 280-metre sidewalk section, and a 75-metre multi-use pathway bridge connecting Osprey Village’s developments with the Town of Bridgewater.

Kings-Hants MP Kody Blois said the projects will reduce water pollution and support residential and commercial growth in the town and municipality for years to come. He announced the funding on behalf of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities Minister Dominic LeBlanc.

“Our municipalities depend on modern infrastructure to be competitive and attract new residents to their communities,” added Susan Corkum-Greek, minister of Economic Development and MLA for Lunenburg. “By making this investment, we are focused on the future and laying the foundation for continued growth for years to come.”



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Rothesay wastewater treatment plant price tag up 50 per cent

■ **BY MARLO GLASS**
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The cost to build a new wastewater treatment facility in Rothesay has ballooned by nearly 50 per cent, leaving the town considering its options for going forward.

At a recent town council meeting, town manager John Jarvie said the project, originally billed at \$21.7 million, will now likely cost \$32 million due to “a number of recent economic factors.”

First announced in summer 2021, the original price tag was split between all three levels of government, with more than \$8.6 million coming from the feds, \$7.2 million from the province and \$5.7 million from the municipality.

The town can’t shoulder the \$10 million increase to the project alone, though, Jarvie said.

The town currently has two wastewater lagoons in Kennebecasis Park and one at Sagamore Point, and originally planned to expand capacity at Sagamore Point and route all wastewater there to a new, “state of the art” treatment centre.

The new process would rely not on chemicals but instead employing “biologic

“It’s a phase in the initial project, which will improve the quality of the wastewater entering the river,” he said.
“It’s a creative way of moving the project forward.”

— ROTHESAY TOWN MANAGER JOHN JARVIE

processes” to reduce organic material in wastewater, followed by ultraviolet sterilization, returning water to the Kennebecasis River “with quality as good as, or better than, its natural flow,” Mayor Nancy Grant said when the project was first announced.

Now, town staff are proposing a phased approach to the project, using some of the money already secured to expand Sagamore Point’s lagoon and upgrade it, “acting as an interim project” until the town receives approval for the cash to build the new wastewater treatment facility.

“The thought is, we can use some of the money already approved,” Jarvie said, adding there’s “still hope” the town receives the amount of money required to complete the full project as originally planned.

“It’s a phase in the initial project, which will improve the quality of the wastewater entering the river,” he said. “It’s a creative way of moving the project forward.”

The idea is to keep as many options

open as possible, Jarvie said, but the approach will have an even larger price tag, though, estimated at \$37 million.

The only other option is to increase the rate on residents’ water bills, he said.

When the project was first announced in 2021, Grant said it was “too early to say precisely” what effect the project would have on utility rates.

But, she added, “I want to assure rate payers we are cost conscious and will maintain a sewer rate which is competitive with other communities in the region.”

At the 2021 announcement, Rothesay MLA Ted Flemming said the community was growing and “finding a place to clean that water is necessary.”

During the spring floods of 2018 and 2019, Rothesay’s three water treatment lagoons flooded, which contaminated the Kennebecasis River.

“We never want that to happen again,” Grant said.



Rothesay Mayor Nancy Grant

Rothesay’s town council voted to accept the proposed phasing plan, though no dates have been solidified. The project is anticipated to be completed around 2030, “subject to getting sufficient grant money,” Jarvie told council.

Telegraph-Journal

Major upgrades in Moncton designed to help mitigate impacts of climate change

■ **BY ANDY WALKER**

A major upgrade in municipal infrastructure has been announced for Moncton that will help prepare the Hub City for future climate events.

The \$36.3-million project the three levels of government are funding, in-



Moncton Mayor Dawn Arnold

cludes the installation of a storm sewer and dedicated sanitary sewer on Downing Street and Assomption Boulevard, as well as extending the municipal services to serve Moncton’s growing downtown core. The project includes elevating streets to offset the expected rise in sea levels and relocating existing aerial lines underground to increase resilience to extreme weather conditions.

Mayor Dawn Arnold explained these upgrades will increase the city’s capacity to manage wastewater and stormwater, increase access to potable water, and improve traffic flow and pedestrian access throughout this area of downtown.

“This funding is welcome news,” said the mayor during the funding announcement. “It will support significant improvements that will encourage the overall densification and revitalization of our downtown and help us move forward with the downtown vision and infrastructure renewal detailed in the city’s Downtown Core Community Improvement Plan.”

The federal government is spending more than \$14.5 million on the project,

while the Government of New Brunswick is contributing more than \$12.1 million and the City of Moncton is contributing more than \$9.7 million.

“These upgrades to water management and roads in downtown Moncton improves the city’s capacity to manage water, stormwater and wastewater, as well as protect Moncton and its residents against climate change and extreme weather events,” noted Ginette Petitpas Taylor, minister of Official Languages and minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, on behalf of Dominic LeBlanc, minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure

and Communities. “We will continue to work with our partners to invest in these types of projects, which are good for people and the environment.”

Local Government and Local Governance Reform Minister Daniel Allain added the project will have long-term economic and social benefits for residents of New Brunswick.

“This is an exciting development that will lead to private sector investment to support the growth of the Greater Moncton Region,” he said. “Investing in critical infrastructure in our communities also mitigates the risk of disastrous flooding.”

“It will support significant improvements that will encourage the overall densification and revitalization of our downtown and help us move forward with the downtown vision and infrastructure renewal detailed in the city’s Downtown Core Community Improvement Plan.”

— MONCTON MAYOR DAWN ARNOLD

Bridgewater hikes sewer fees

■ BY KEITH CORCORAN

Ratepayers in Bridgewater will shell out more for property taxes and sewage fees. For residential property owners, it's the second time in three years that the town's government hiked the tax rate.

Commenting during the April 11 council meeting when civic politicians passed the 2023-24 operating and capital budgets, Mayor David Mitchell tried to reassure taxpayers.

"There's no fluff in the budget," he said. "We're running as lean as we can and, I think we have explained this very well over the last five years, that we have \$50 million in wastewater work to be done and we have to pay for it."

A 2018 study of Bridgewater's sanitary stormwater system estimated that spending of between \$25 million to \$48 million

would be needed to meet sewage facilities and operations requirements dictated by other levels of government.

Wastewater overflows have to be eliminated by 2039, a deadline that's left municipalities rushing to make expensive upgrades to aging equipment with little or no financial help from the province nor Ottawa.

Mitchell said the current town council is trying to pay closer attention to managing infrastructure assets.

"Now we're doing the right things but, unfortunately, our timeline is shortened, not our decision and it's not the wrong decision, but we need funding and support and we're not getting the level of support we need."

As a consequence, the residential sewer rate goes to \$518 for one dwelling unit and \$328 for each additional dwelling unit, a boost from \$487.89 and \$185.89 in 2022-23. The commercial tariff rises to \$1,109 for first user, plus \$742 for each additional user, an increase from \$1,036.28, plus \$530.22. The base charge impacting South Shore Regional Hospital quadruples to \$4,922 from \$1,036.28. Hotels and motels will also pay more.

The sewage rate motion passed but councillors Mike Conklin, Jennifer MacDonald and Andrew Tanner voted against the changes.

Meanwhile, residential rates increased to \$1.85 per \$100 of assessment, from \$1.75 in 2022-23. Commercial property owners in town see a number four in front of their rate for the first time; \$4.07 per \$100 of assessment, up from \$3.97.

Council passed the rates with just Conklin voting against the figures. Although he voted in favour of the budget, Coun. Wayne Thorburne said he reached his limit in terms of what he thinks the taxpayer can handle. "No more increases; that's as far as I'll go," he told his colleagues at one point.

The town's 2023-24 capital budget is just shy of \$15 million, less than the nearly \$17 million earmarked in 2022-23, but nearly \$18 million in unfinished work was carried over to this fiscal year. The operating budget is higher, nearly \$29 million, up from \$26 million in 2022-23.

"We all recognize the challenge people face with soaring costs be it food, power or something else. The decisions we make today have an impact on all our tomorrows



The Town of Bridgewater spiked residential tax rates for the second time in three years. (LighthouseNOW file photo)

"We're running as lean as we can and ... we have \$50 million in wastewater work to be done and we have to pay for it."

— DAVID MITCHELL, MAYOR, TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

just like the decisions of yesterday impact our todays," a post on the mayor's social media page reads. "The silver lining in this is that the work we are doing will end one day and the cost of all those upgrades will be paid for."

"Right now, it sucks; I'm not sure how else to put it because it does but it's the right thing to do so we'll get it done."

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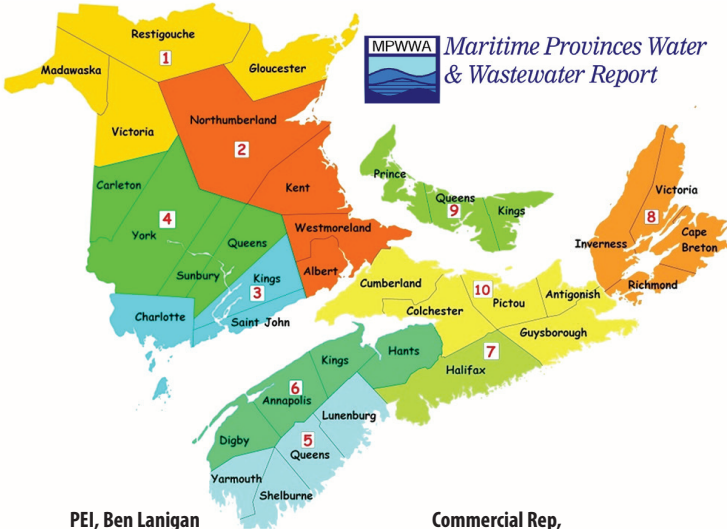
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Major wastewater project announced for Inverness

■ BY ANDY WALKER

Three levels of government have announced a \$24-million upgrade in water and wastewater infrastructure for the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

The municipality will replace its aging wastewater treatment facility in Inverness with a more efficient facility that will protect the health of surrounding waters. It will also enable the county to upgrade the sanitary collection of wastewater and water distribution systems on Central Avenue and Veteran’s Memorial Court.

“The Municipality of Inverness County thanks the provincial and federal governments for this funding announcement. We are making history today as this is the largest infrastructure upgrade initiative the municipality has ever taken on,” said Bonny MacIsaac, warden of the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

She went on to say the changes will

have a positive impact on quality of life in the community and serve as a building block for the future growth of the county.

“It’s a day of celebration for the community of Inverness and for the county as a whole,” she said. “With today’s announcement and several other major projects underway, this is an exciting time to be in Inverness County.”

According to a press release the municipality issued regarding the announcement, an assessment indicates it will take \$103 million over the next 10 years to improve and maintain the current status of infrastructure and associated level of services to residents. The municipality owns approximately \$186 million in water and wastewater assets. The assessment identified Inverness’s wastewater treatment plant as a priority due to its age, condition and operational deficiencies.


The Government of Canada is spending \$9,764,400 on this project. The Gov-

ernment of Nova Scotia is contributing \$8,137,000. The municipality is contributing \$6,509,600.

Cape Breton-Canso MP Mike Keloway called the announcement great news for the community. He said the project will reduce water pollution in the area and support the residential and commercial growth that’s happening in the community.

Deputy Premier Allan MacMaster,

who is also the MLA for Inverness, added “This will be one of the largest infrastructure projects for a community in Nova Scotia. People in Inverness will get better drinking water that is easier on home appliances. It will also mean a future without pipes bursting underneath these streets. First impressions matter, and this will help Inverness to look even more like the world-class tourism destination that it is.”



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