

# Sherbrooke City Council adopts 2024 operating budget amidst economic challenges

Record Staff

The Sherbrooke City Council has approved its 2024 operating budget, which amounts to \$421.2 million, marking an increase of \$21.1 million from the previous year.

According to a press release, despite the challenging economic context characterized by inflation and interest rates, the City has prioritized maintaining services for the population and continues to focus on its key priorities: community development, housing, and new mobility solutions. Additionally, the City ensures its resilience by maintaining sound financial management. This includes increasing cash-paid capital assets, continuing contributions to the stabilization fund for unforeseen circumstances, and creating a fund to repay debt service in the

coming years.

## Revenue highlights

- The 2024 revenues are set at \$421.2 million, up from \$400.1 million in 2023.

- Municipal tax bills will see a 3.13% increase for an average single-family home, below the inflation threshold of 5.15 per cent.

- The tax impact for an average single-family home (valued at \$259,697) in 2024 is an increase of \$95.

- To contain the tax increase, the City is diversifying its revenue sources, including:

- \$0.3 million from increasing parking meter rates from \$1.50/hr to \$2/hr.

- \$0.1 million by ending free downtown parking during the 2024 holiday season.

- \$0.3 million from fines and penalties (increasing from \$49 to \$59).

- \$0.2 million from access rights to

real estate data.

- \$0.9 million from a new \$80 annual pool tax.

- \$0.4 million from a tax on impermeable surfaces of industrial buildings, targeting surfaces like paving, gravel, and concrete.

## Expenditure overview

- Expenditures are categorized into various segments, including \$72 million for public safety, \$78 million for infrastructure financing, \$57 million for recreation, and \$41 million for roads and buildings.

- A total of \$6.6 million is required for adjustments in employee compensation and employer contributions.

- Inflation adjustments for goods and services, such as snow removal, street cleaning (\$1.2 million), equipment maintenance, fuel (\$1 million), waste collection, and treatment (\$0.5 million), totaling

\$6.6 million.

## Strategic priorities

- Housing development: The City is contributing to rental assistance and financing initiatives to increase housing units by 200 per year.

- Alternative mobility solutions: Initiatives include subsidies for electric bicycle purchases, winter viability projects for cycling paths, bike-sharing programs, and the pedestrianization of North Wellington Street.

- Community development: Efforts focus on protecting natural environments, improving citizen communication, financial assistance in sports, community festivals, cultural support, and airport backing.

- Resilient city development: Priorities include electrical network reliability, waste management, workforce attraction and retention, and risk management.

# Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre(CABMN) celebrates International Volunteer Day in Potton



## THE SCOOP

### MABLE HASTINGS

On Tuesday, Dec. 5 the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN) in Potton celebrated International Volunteer Day with a wine and cheese party held at the CABMN Feather in the Wind Senior Centre from 7 to 9 p.m.

The International Volunteer Day is held each year on December 5th. Mandated by the UN General Assembly, it is viewed as a unique opportunity for volunteers and organizations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values, and to promote their work among their communities. Apart from mobilising thousands of volunteers every year, the United Nations Volunteers program contributes to peace and development by advocating for the recognition of volunteers and working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming.

The CABMN coordinates an impressive bank of over 240 volunteers from five or more municipalities including: Potton, Bolton-Est, Sainte-

Etienne-de-Bolton, Eastman, Stukely-Sud and more... Close to 70 volunteers attended the event on December 5th. This year entertainment was brought back to the event with "Double or Nothing" a duo featuring Kylie Cote and Mike Patrick. Musical ditties including the songs of Shania Twain, Johnny Cash, Bryan Adams and more were enjoyed by the enthusiastic crowd that, at events end requested a dance floor be incorporated next year!

The Annual Karen Muzerall Memorial Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Barbara Taylor for her devotion for her efforts in the settling of the Malikova family who moved to Potton a few months ago from the Ukraine. Taylor has been instrumental in all aspects of fulfilling the needs of the family and her tireless efforts were applauded by all. The Partage/Share Food Bank took the opportunity to thank longtime committee member, June Peacock for her contribution to the efforts to bring emergency food and Christmas baskets to needy families. The committee presented June with flowers and a big thank you as June steps down handing the Chairperson position to Julia Eldridge. CABMN Youth Centre Coordinator, Ethan Ball honored three volunteers who give so generously of their time to the Youth Centre where programs for the youth and persons with intellectual and physical disabilities are held. Hilary Head was recognized for her weekly support to the CIUSSSE/CHUS Day Centre where

Hilary helps the clients to create a newsletter to take home to parents. Beatrice Baass was recognized for



CABMN Volunteers Danielle Melanson, Lucie Maurer and Monique Hebert were all smiles at the Dec. 5 event

her volunteering to provide weekly French lessons for Ukrainian residents now living in Potton and others and finally, Joan Westland-Eby for her efforts in helping to organize a pen pal project between the youth of Potton and children in Columbia.

Refreshments included cheese from Abbaye Saint-Benoit, coldcuts, fruit, crackers, baguettes...as well as wine and an assortment of non-alcoholic beverages. Door Prizes consisted of three beautiful baskets with items donated by local businesses. Winners included: Carmen Aubin, Bob Chakra and Murielle Parkes (all CABMN volunteers).

If you would like to become a CABMN volunteer, please contact Debra Harding (Volunteer Coordinator) at d.harding@cabmn.org or call the CABMN main office at 450-292-3114 extension 109.

The CABMN extends its gratitude to all who volunteer and give of their time and talents. In the case of the CABMN it is the volunteers who make so



ETHAN BALL

Barbara Taylor-Volunteer of the Year

many activities and projects possible. THANK YOU!