



2026-2029  
DRAFT  
BUDGET

YVETTE CASSIDY, CAO  
JANUARY 8, 2026

## **Our Region**

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The County of Stettler is a place where wide open spaces meet strong community roots.

Set between the Red Deer and Battle Rivers, our region is shaped by fertile farmland, open pastures, and the kind of scenery that reminds you why rural life matters. With nearly one million acres to care for and 2,777 kilometres of roads connecting it all, our County keeps people, businesses, and communities moving.

Across 4,050 square kilometres, six welcoming hamlets call the County home. Botha, Byemoor, Endiang, Erskine, Gadsby, and Nevis each bring their own character, alongside the close-knit community of Red Willow. To the south, Buffalo Lake adds another layer to life here. From Rochon Sands Heights and Buffalo Lake Meadows to Buffalo Sands, Buffalo View Estates, and Scenic Sands, the lake blends recreation, relaxation, and rural living in a way that is uniquely Stettler County.

What truly strengthens our region is how well we work together. We value our partnerships with neighboring communities, including the Villages of Big Valley and Donalda and the Summer Villages of Rochon Sands and White Sands and the Town of Stettler. These relationships help us share ideas, support local services, and plan for a future that benefits everyone.

At the center of it all are the people who live here. Known for their willingness to pitch in and look out for one another, our residents are the soul of the County. Their pride, resilience, and sense of community continue to shape who we are and where we are going.

Welcome to the County of Stettler, a place built on connection, cooperation, and the simple belief: Strong communities make a strong future.

## **Our Council**

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In October 2025, a newly elected Council was sworn in to serve the County of Stettler for the next four years. Made up of seven councillors representing seven wards, this Council brings a renewed sense of responsibility and dedication to guiding the County through the opportunities and challenges ahead. Entrusted by residents across the region, Council is committed to thoughtful leadership grounded in accountability, collaboration, and respect for the communities they serve.

Council works within the framework of the Municipal Government Act, using it as a foundation for sound decision making and long term planning. Central to their work is the County of Stettler’s annual Strategic Plan, which sets clear priorities and helps guide Council’s actions. Supported by a careful and realistic budget, this plan ensures community goals are translated into practical results.

As costs continue to rise and expectations for reliable, high-quality services remain strong, Council is focused on making informed choices that balance fiscal responsibility with service excellence. Every dollar is considered with care, with an emphasis on delivering value to residents while protecting the County’s financial stability.

Working closely with Administration, Council is committed to meeting today’s needs while steering the County toward a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous future for generations to come.

## The Budget Cycle

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Budgeting in the County of Stettler is an ongoing, year-round process.

Each year, Council and Administration work together to develop a four year financial plan for day-to-day operations, alongside a six year outlook for capital projects. This approach allows us to plan ahead while remaining flexible as priorities, costs, and opportunities evolve. By treating the budget as a living document rather than a one-time exercise, it ensures decisions are thoughtful, responsive, and aligned with the long term needs of our communities.



## Understanding your municipal taxes

A homeowner with a property valued at \$580,000 will face an annual tax bill around \$4,850.00:

- \$2,371.66 allocated to external entities such as the Provincial Government, Town of Stettler, Stettler Waste Management Authority, and Seniors Housing.
- \$2,478.34 dedicated to funding municipal services in 2026, which breaks down to about \$206.53 per month.

County Taxes	Amounts on your tax bill levied and kept by the County of Stettler to provide services	
	Home Assessed at \$580,000	\$2,443.71
	County Recreation Requisition (To fund recreation programs and facilities in the County of Stettler)	\$34.63
	<b>Total Municipal Taxes</b>	<b>\$2,478.34</b>
Requisitions	Amounts on your tax bill, collected by the County but paid out to other parties	
	Policing Funding Model (paid to the province)	\$178.12
	Solid Waste Requisition (paid to Stettler Waste Management Authority)	\$156.77
	Town Recreation (paid to the Town of Stettler to support shared use recreation facilities in the Town)	\$186.06
	Education Requisition (paid to the Province to fund K-12 education)	\$1,477.37
	Stettler Housing Requisition (paid to support Seniors and Affordable Housing in our region)	\$347.36
	Doctor Recruitment	\$25.98
	<b>Total Requisitioned Taxes</b>	<b>\$2,371.66</b>
	<b>Total Taxes Paid</b>	<b>\$4,850.00</b>

## What do your taxes support? Services and Responsibilities

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Your municipal tax dollars help the County of Stettler deliver essential services which keep our communities safe, connected, and moving forward.

### Community Health and Safety

- **Protective Services**
  - Road bans, overweight permits, and heavy equipment monitoring to protect our road infrastructure
  - Bylaw enforcement and traffic safety
  - Support for rural crime prevention initiatives
- **Emergency Medical Services**
  - 24/7 Advanced Life Support ambulance service with two ambulances on duty
  - STARS Air Ambulance funding for emergency air transport
- **Emergency Management**
  - Trained staff available 24/7 to lead response during emergencies and disasters.
- **Fire Protection**
  - Heartland Regional Fire and rescue services from four stations, located in Stettler, Big Valley, Donalda, and Byemoor
  - Ongoing maintenance of equipment and facilities

### Community Growth and Sustainability

- **Agricultural Services**
  - Weed and pest control, parks mowing, and environmental stewardship
  - Watercourse management
  - Equipment rentals, workshops, and support for farmers and ranchers
- **Planning, Development, and Mapping**
  - Land use planning, subdivision, and development permits
  - Municipal and intermunicipal planning to guide responsible growth
  - GIS mapping and rural addressing for emergency response
- **Recreation and Culture**
  - Support for libraries, parks, playgrounds, and sports fields
  - Funding for recreation facilities, performing arts, and rural recreation projects
  - Maintenance of pathways and access to recreational lands

### Representation and Advocacy

- Participation in regional boards, committees, and partnerships that support:
  - Agriculture, research, and environmental stewardship
  - Economic development and rural crime prevention
  - Health care recruitment and retention
  - Education, arts, and cultural initiatives

### Corporate Services

- Budgeting, financial reporting, and asset management
- Tax billing, collection, and customer service
- Accounting services for County operations and regional partners
- Records management to ensure transparency and accountability

### **Operations and Utilities**

- **Roads and Infrastructure**
  - Snow removal, grading, graveling, and maintenance of 2,777 km of roads
  - Maintenance of 73 bridges and roadside signage
- **Water and Wastewater**
  - Rural water services, truck fill stations, and agricultural tank loaders
  - Operation of wastewater lagoons in County hamlets
- **Waste Management and Recycling**
  - Regional landfill and transfer stations
  - Recycling programs, including hazardous waste and reuse initiatives

Together, these services reflect the County of Stettler’s commitment to responsible stewardship, community well being, and long-term sustainability.

## **Budget Highlights**

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This budget proposes a 2% tax rate increase in 2026 for residential, non-residential and \*Machinery and Equipment (M&E) and an 8% tax increase for Farmland.

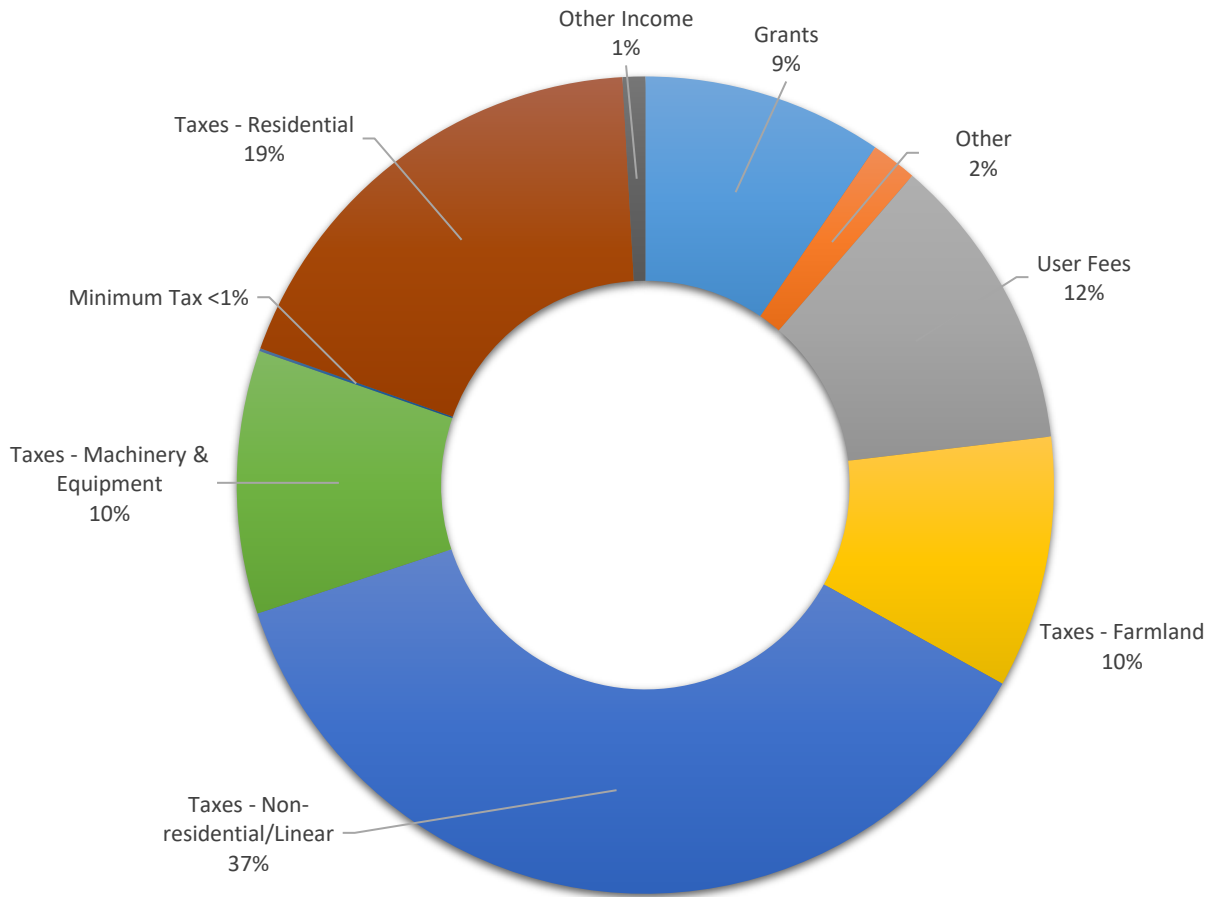
Budget 2026 includes an Operations Budget of \$31,965,525, a capital budget of \$3,114,133 and a 1.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for staff.

*\*Machinery and Equipment (M&E) Municipal Tax is a specific type of property tax levied on the value of industrial machinery and equipment used in manufacturing and processing facilities.*



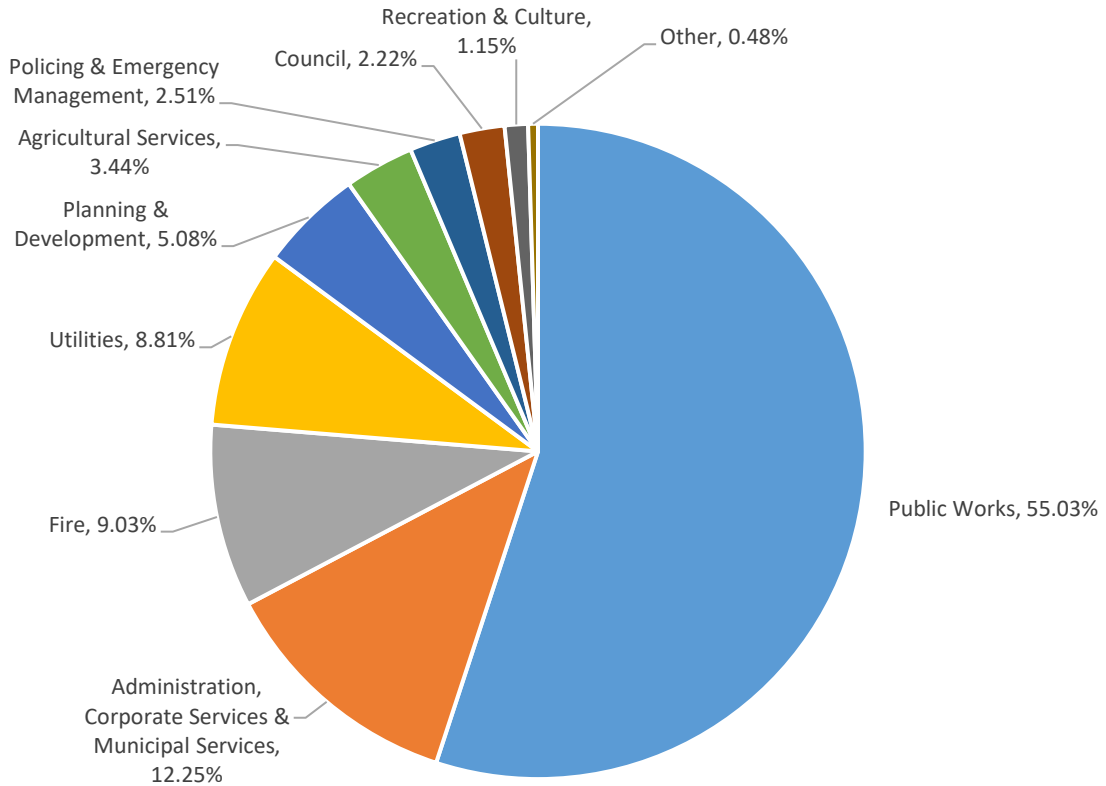
## Where the Money Comes From

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# Where the Money Goes

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## *Executive Summary*

On behalf of Administration, I am pleased to present the County of Stettler's 2026-2029 Budget. The 2026-2029 Budget is about keeping the County of Stettler running strong today while preparing responsibly for what lies ahead.

This budget supports reliable services, protects key infrastructure, and positions the County to respond to growth, change, and unexpected challenges, all while managing costs carefully in a challenging economic environment.

Across every department, the focus is the same: do the essentials well, plan ahead, and make thoughtful decisions with public dollars. Inflation continues to affect fuel, utilities, equipment, and materials, and revenue sources remain uncertain. In response, this budget emphasizes stability, efficiency, and long-term planning rather than expansion for expansion's sake.

Administration plays a central role in coordinating services, supporting Council, and strengthening the County's financial position. Continued emphasis is placed on grant funding, reserve planning, and long-term asset management. By improving how grants are tracked, planning for future technology needs, and building reserves for major replacements and regional health initiatives, the County remains prepared for both opportunities and challenges.

Public safety and community well-being remain top priorities. Protective Services, Emergency Management, and Fire Services work together to safeguard residents, infrastructure, and volunteers. The transition to Heartland Regional Fire continues to strengthen regional cooperation as we move towards a commission-model that gives all regions a seat at the table, including the Summer Villages of White Sands and Rochon Sands, and the Villages of Donalda and Big Valley. This transition includes investments in equipment, training, and volunteer support to ensure reliable emergency response across the County. Emergency Management focuses on preparedness, training, and regional coordination to ensure the County is ready when emergencies occur.

Planning and Development supports responsible growth by providing clear guidance, timely approvals, and updated policies which reflect changing regulations and development trends. Ongoing work on land use planning, intermunicipal cooperation, and Buffalo Lake access helps ensure development aligns with community values and long-term sustainability.

Operations remain one of the County's largest areas of investment reflecting the importance of roads, bridges, drainage, and gravel supply. Proactive maintenance, equipment replacement, and infrastructure upgrades help extend the life of existing assets and keep the transportation network safe and reliable for residents, farmers, and businesses.

Agricultural Services continues to support producers and landowners through weed control, environmental stewardship, education, and infrastructure protection. These services protect

both agricultural productivity and County assets, reinforcing the importance of agriculture to the local economy and way of life.

Environmental Services focuses on delivering safe drinking water, managing wastewater responsibly, and expanding rural water services where funding allows. Strategic investments and careful planning help ensure regulatory compliance, system reliability, and long-term environmental protection.

Recreation and Insurance programs strengthen community connections by supporting rural education initiatives, local organizations, and risk management practices. By investing in youth education, not-for-profit sustainability, and insurance planning, the County supports healthy, engaged communities while managing risk responsibly.

Overall, the 2026-2029 Budget reflects a practical and disciplined approach. It prioritizes service reliability, protects critical infrastructure, supports volunteers and staff, and maintains reserves to ensure financial resilience.

This budget is not just about numbers, but about stewardship, preparedness, and maintaining the quality of life residents expect.

Council and Administration look forward to continuing this work together, guided by the Strategic Plan and informed by community priorities, to ensure the County of Stettler remains strong, safe, and well prepared for the future.

## **Breaking Down the Budget**

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Like households and businesses across the region, the County of Stettler continues to feel the impacts of inflation. Higher costs for fuel, utilities, materials, and supplies affect everything from heating County buildings to operating our graders, mowers, and other essential equipment. These pressures are reflected throughout the 2026-2029 budget.

At the same time, revenue remains a challenge. Oil and gas assessments have not returned to historic levels, and funding from provincial and federal programs continues to be limited and less predictable. This makes careful planning more important than ever. The 2026-2029 budget focuses on responsible financial management, controlling costs where possible, and setting aside funds to support future capital needs. Wherever we can, we look for efficiencies and smarter purchasing to stretch every dollar further.

Delivering services to our community means balancing today's needs with long term sustainability. It means maintaining the services residents rely on now, while also planning ahead for infrastructure replacement and future growth. This budget reflects the balance.

Over the years, residents have consistently told us what matters most. Priorities such as road maintenance and gravel, fire protection, waste and recycling services, agricultural support, and bylaw enforcement continue to guide yearly budget decisions. The County remains committed to delivering these services efficiently and at a level our community expects, while staying within our financial means.

### **How the Budget Is Built**

Each year, Administration reviews projected costs required to maintain services, infrastructure, and programs. Available revenue sources are then assessed to determine what can be funded. From there, a proposed budget is prepared for Council’s review and consideration, organized into two main parts: the operating budget and the capital budget.

The 2026-2029 budget is designed to manage inflationary pressures while still addressing the ongoing need to repair, replace, and invest in infrastructure.

### **Operating Budget**

The operating budget covers the day-to-day costs of running the County and delivering services. This includes expenses related to rural water services, snow removal, drainage maintenance, road repairs, gravelling, grading, and other core municipal functions. These are the services residents see and rely on every day.

### **Capital Budget**

The capital budget focuses on long term investments to support the County’s ability to operate efficiently and safely into the future. Capital projects are typically one time or multi-year investments and include road construction and rehabilitation, water and wastewater infrastructure, stormwater systems, and the purchase of major equipment, vehicles, and technology. These investments help protect existing assets and reduce the risk of more costly repairs down the road.

### **Balancing the Budget**

Council and Administration share the goal of maintaining, and where possible improving, service levels while planning ahead for future needs. The 2026-2029 budget reflects a careful and forward looking approach which balances fiscal responsibility with the need to support a strong, sustainable County for years to come.



looking approach  
fiscal responsibility  
support a strong,  
sustainable County

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
<b>00 - General</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Taxes	\$22,329,098.00	\$23,168,661.00	\$22,304,098.00	\$22,004,098.00	\$22,304,098.00
Penalties/Fines	\$40,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
Investments	\$200,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$200,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$22,569,098.00</b>	<b>\$23,518,661.00</b>	<b>\$22,654,098.00</b>	<b>\$22,354,098.00</b>	<b>\$22,604,098.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Goods and Supplies	-\$5,000.00	-\$5,000.00	-\$5,000.00	-\$5,000.00	-\$5,000.00
Requisitions	-\$5,395,644.00	-\$7,289,447.00	-\$6,871,188.00	-\$6,882,520.00	-\$6,888,186.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$5,400,644.00</b>	<b>-\$7,294,447.00</b>	<b>-\$6,876,188.00</b>	<b>-\$6,887,520.00</b>	<b>-\$6,893,186.00</b>
<b>00 - General Total</b>	<b>\$17,168,454.00</b>	<b>\$16,224,214.00</b>	<b>\$15,777,910.00</b>	<b>\$15,466,578.00</b>	<b>\$15,710,912.00</b>
<b>11 - Council</b>					
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$155,750.00	-\$166,000.00	-\$169,000.00	-\$170,000.00	-\$171,000.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$16,500.00	-\$5,500.00	-\$5,500.00	-\$5,500.00	-\$18,500.00
Labour	-\$319,500.00	-\$291,900.00	-\$300,600.00	-\$309,700.00	-\$322,100.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$491,750.00</b>	<b>-\$463,400.00</b>	<b>-\$475,100.00</b>	<b>-\$485,200.00</b>	<b>-\$511,600.00</b>
<b>11 - Council Total</b>	<b>-\$491,750.00</b>	<b>-\$463,400.00</b>	<b>-\$475,100.00</b>	<b>-\$485,200.00</b>	<b>-\$511,600.00</b>
<b>12 - Administration</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$90,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Service and Sales	\$441,798.00	\$567,798.00	\$460,798.00	\$468,798.00	\$476,798.00
Other	\$11,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$543,298.00</b>	<b>\$572,298.00</b>	<b>\$465,298.00</b>	<b>\$473,298.00</b>	<b>\$481,298.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$1,004,500.00	-\$965,900.00	-\$986,800.00	-\$987,800.00	-\$1,004,800.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$194,000.00	-\$197,000.00	-\$201,500.00	-\$202,500.00	-\$205,500.00
Labour	-\$1,773,400.00	-\$1,876,300.00	-\$1,932,600.00	-\$1,990,600.00	-\$2,070,000.00
Transfers to other Government	-\$260,000.00	-\$200.00	-\$200.00	-\$200.00	-\$200.00
Interest Expense	-\$19,000.00	-\$20,000.00	-\$21,000.00	-\$21,000.00	-\$21,000.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$73,000.00	-\$73,000.00	-\$73,000.00	-\$73,000.00	-\$73,000.00

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Capital	-\$82,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$30,000.00	\$0.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$3,405,900.00</b>	<b>-\$3,132,400.00</b>	<b>-\$3,215,100.00</b>	<b>-\$3,305,100.00</b>	<b>-\$3,374,500.00</b>
<b>12 - Administration Total</b>	<b>-\$2,862,602.00</b>	<b>-\$2,560,102.00</b>	<b>-\$2,749,802.00</b>	<b>-\$2,831,802.00</b>	<b>-\$2,893,202.00</b>

### 23 - Fire

<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$202,422.00	\$252,422.00	\$202,422.00	\$202,422.00	\$202,422.00
Service and Sales	\$81,144.00	\$120,586.00	\$82,403.00	\$82,403.00	\$82,403.00
Sales	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00
Transfer from Reserves	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$353,566.00</b>	<b>\$443,008.00</b>	<b>\$354,825.00</b>	<b>\$354,825.00</b>	<b>\$354,825.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$168,550.00	-\$266,070.00	-\$266,070.00	-\$266,070.00	-\$266,070.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$515,940.00	-\$507,110.00	-\$491,610.00	-\$491,610.00	-\$491,610.00
Labour	-\$355,400.00	-\$492,200.00	-\$498,900.00	-\$506,300.00	-\$516,400.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$214,600.00	-\$214,600.00	-\$214,600.00	-\$214,600.00	-\$214,600.00
Capital	-\$875,000.00	-\$850,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$2,129,490.00</b>	<b>-\$2,329,980.00</b>	<b>-\$1,471,180.00</b>	<b>-\$1,478,580.00</b>	<b>-\$1,488,680.00</b>
<b>23 - Fire Total</b>	<b>-\$1,775,924.00</b>	<b>-\$1,886,972.00</b>	<b>-\$1,116,355.00</b>	<b>-\$1,123,755.00</b>	<b>-\$1,133,855.00</b>

### 24 - Emergency Management

<b>Revenue</b>					
Service and Sales	\$95,000.00	\$78,000.00	\$95,000.00	\$95,000.00	\$95,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$95,000.00</b>	<b>\$78,000.00</b>	<b>\$95,000.00</b>	<b>\$95,000.00</b>	<b>\$95,000.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$50,000.00	-\$12,000.00	-\$12,000.00	-\$27,000.00	-\$15,000.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$11,000.00	-\$11,500.00	-\$11,500.00	-\$11,500.00	-\$11,500.00
Labour	-\$97,800.00	-\$90,300.00	-\$93,000.00	-\$95,800.00	-\$99,600.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$158,800.00</b>	<b>-\$113,800.00</b>	<b>-\$116,500.00</b>	<b>-\$134,300.00</b>	<b>-\$126,100.00</b>
<b>24 - Emergency Management Total</b>	<b>-\$63,800.00</b>	<b>-\$35,800.00</b>	<b>-\$21,500.00</b>	<b>-\$39,300.00</b>	<b>-\$31,100.00</b>

### 26 - Protective Services

<b>Revenue</b>					
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	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Service and Sales	\$31,000.00	\$41,500.00	\$41,500.00	\$41,500.00	\$41,500.00
Penalties/Fines	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$61,000.00</b>	<b>\$71,500.00</b>	<b>\$71,500.00</b>	<b>\$71,500.00</b>	<b>\$71,500.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$506,025.00	-\$117,500.00	-\$125,178.00	-\$127,532.00	-\$127,532.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$72,500.00	-\$68,500.00	-\$77,500.00	-\$77,500.00	-\$77,500.00
Labour	-\$390,900.00	-\$316,900.00	-\$326,500.00	-\$336,400.00	-\$349,800.00
Transfers to other Government	-\$10,000.00	-\$10,000.00	-\$10,000.00	-\$10,000.00	-\$10,000.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$17,000.00	-\$17,000.00	-\$17,000.00	-\$17,000.00	-\$17,000.00
Capital	-\$29,873.00	-\$30,000.00	\$0.00	-\$110,000.00	-\$110,000.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$1,026,298.00</b>	<b>-\$559,900.00</b>	<b>-\$556,178.00</b>	<b>-\$678,432.00</b>	<b>-\$691,832.00</b>
<b>26 - Protective Services</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>-\$965,298.00</b>	<b>-\$488,400.00</b>	<b>-\$484,678.00</b>	<b>-\$606,932.00</b>	<b>-\$620,332.00</b>
<b>32 - Transportation Services</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$2,724,035.00	\$2,365,895.00	\$1,637,746.00	\$1,637,746.00	\$1,637,746.00
Service and Sales	\$440,550.00	\$483,500.00	\$378,550.00	\$378,550.00	\$378,550.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$3,164,585.00</b>	<b>\$2,849,395.00</b>	<b>\$2,016,296.00</b>	<b>\$2,016,296.00</b>	<b>\$2,016,296.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$971,875.00	-\$1,498,700.00	-\$1,099,275.00	-\$1,099,275.00	-\$1,099,275.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$4,210,550.00	-\$4,037,400.00	-\$3,904,350.00	-\$3,905,850.00	-\$3,905,850.00
Labour	-\$4,847,000.00	-\$5,070,600.00	-\$5,221,400.00	-\$5,377,700.00	-\$5,593,100.00
Interest Expense	-\$287,017.00	-\$241,807.00	-\$194,837.00	-\$155,833.00	-\$145,134.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$2,750,000.00	-\$2,750,000.00	-\$2,750,000.00	-\$2,750,000.00	-\$2,750,000.00
Capital	-\$1,244,524.00	-\$755,000.00	-\$2,294,500.00	-\$1,975,000.00	-\$1,975,000.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$14,310,966.00</b>	<b>-\$14,353,507.00</b>	<b>\$15,464,362.00</b>	<b>\$15,263,658.00</b>	<b>\$15,468,359.00</b>
<b>32 - Transportation Services</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>-\$11,146,381.00</b>	<b>-\$11,504,112.00</b>	<b>\$13,448,066.00</b>	<b>\$13,247,362.00</b>	<b>\$13,452,063.00</b>
<b>33 - Airport</b>					
<b>Expense</b>					
Transfers to other Government	-\$4,500.00	-\$4,500.00	-\$4,500.00	-\$4,500.00	-\$4,500.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
<b>33 - Airport Total</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>	<b>-\$4,500.00</b>
<b>41 - Water Distribution</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$430,084.00	\$444,133.00	\$430,084.00	\$430,084.00	\$430,084.00
Service and Sales	\$713,000.00	\$783,000.00	\$783,000.00	\$782,000.00	\$783,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$1,143,084.00</b>	<b>\$1,227,133.00</b>	<b>\$1,213,084.00</b>	<b>\$1,212,084.00</b>	<b>\$1,213,084.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$555,420.00	-\$556,165.00	-\$569,265.00	-\$576,985.00	-\$584,035.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$112,875.00	-\$112,296.00	-\$111,818.00	-\$114,039.00	-\$114,039.00
Labour	-\$313,200.00	-\$328,200.00	-\$338,100.00	-\$348,300.00	-\$362,200.00
Transfers to other Government	-\$140,000.00	-\$140,000.00	-\$140,000.00	-\$140,000.00	-\$140,000.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$240,000.00	-\$240,000.00	-\$240,000.00	-\$240,000.00	-\$240,000.00
Capital	-\$220,000.00	-\$444,133.00	-\$260,000.00	-\$300,000.00	-\$260,000.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$1,581,495.00</b>	<b>-\$1,820,794.00</b>	<b>-\$1,659,183.00</b>	<b>-\$1,719,324.00</b>	<b>-\$1,700,274.00</b>
<b>41 - Water Distribution Total</b>	<b>-\$438,411.00</b>	<b>-\$593,661.00</b>	<b>-\$446,099.00</b>	<b>-\$507,240.00</b>	<b>-\$487,190.00</b>
<b>42 - Sanitary Services</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$0.00	\$438,488.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Service and Sales	\$120,200.00	\$139,800.00	\$139,800.00	\$139,800.00	\$139,800.00
Sales	\$20,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$140,200.00</b>	<b>\$603,288.00</b>	<b>\$164,800.00</b>	<b>\$164,800.00</b>	<b>\$164,800.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$263,150.00	-\$290,648.00	-\$293,650.00	-\$299,250.00	-\$299,300.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$82,375.00	-\$78,396.00	-\$80,518.00	-\$82,739.00	-\$82,739.00
Labour	-\$313,200.00	-\$328,200.00	-\$338,100.00	-\$348,300.00	-\$362,200.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$205,000.00	-\$205,000.00	-\$205,000.00	-\$205,000.00	-\$205,000.00
Capital	-\$50,000.00	-\$950,000.00	-\$30,000.00	-\$150,000.00	\$0.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$913,725.00</b>	<b>-\$1,852,244.00</b>	<b>-\$947,268.00</b>	<b>-\$1,085,289.00</b>	<b>-\$949,239.00</b>
<b>42 - Sanitary Services Total</b>	<b>-\$773,525.00</b>	<b>-\$1,248,956.00</b>	<b>-\$782,468.00</b>	<b>-\$920,489.00</b>	<b>-\$784,439.00</b>

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
<b>43 - Garbage Collection &amp; Disposal</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Other Income	\$0.00	\$191,425.00	\$192,000.00	\$192,000.00	\$192,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$191,425.00</b>	<b>\$192,000.00</b>	<b>\$192,000.00</b>	<b>\$192,000.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Goods and Supplies	-\$87,000.00	-\$28,000.00	-\$281,000.00	-\$281,000.00	-\$281,000.00
Transfers to other					
Government	-\$441,948.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$528,948.00</b>	<b>-\$28,000.00</b>	<b>-\$281,000.00</b>	<b>-\$281,000.00</b>	<b>-\$281,000.00</b>
<b>43 - Garbage Collection &amp; Disposal Total</b>	<b>-\$528,948.00</b>	<b>\$163,425.00</b>	<b>-\$89,000.00</b>	<b>-\$89,000.00</b>	<b>-\$89,000.00</b>
<b>51 - Family &amp; Community Support Services</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$180,487.00	\$180,488.00	\$180,488.00	\$180,488.00	\$180,488.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$180,487.00</b>	<b>\$180,488.00</b>	<b>\$180,488.00</b>	<b>\$180,488.00</b>	<b>\$180,488.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$1,000.00	-\$1,000.00	-\$1,000.00	-\$1,000.00	-\$1,000.00
Labour	-\$2,550.00	-\$2,550.00	-\$2,550.00	-\$2,550.00	-\$2,550.00
Transfers to other					
Government	-\$250,609.00	-\$250,609.00	-\$250,609.00	-\$250,609.00	-\$250,609.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$254,159.00</b>	<b>-\$254,159.00</b>	<b>-\$254,159.00</b>	<b>-\$254,159.00</b>	<b>-\$254,159.00</b>
<b>51 - Family &amp; Community Support Services Total</b>	<b>-\$73,672.00</b>	<b>-\$73,671.00</b>	<b>-\$73,671.00</b>	<b>-\$73,671.00</b>	<b>-\$73,671.00</b>
<b>56 - Cemeteries</b>					
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$22,500.00	-\$22,500.00	-\$22,500.00	-\$22,500.00	-\$22,500.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>
<b>56 - Cemeteries Total</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>	<b>-\$22,500.00</b>
<b>62 - Agricultural Services</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$135,000.00	\$184,997.00	\$184,997.00	\$135,000.00	\$135,000.00

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Service and Sales	\$79,460.00	\$99,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$214,460.00</b>	<b>\$283,997.00</b>	<b>\$244,997.00</b>	<b>\$195,000.00</b>	<b>\$195,000.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$107,050.00	-\$112,500.00	-\$106,050.00	-\$103,050.00	-\$103,050.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$512,000.00	-\$367,000.00	-\$608,500.00	-\$608,500.00	-\$608,500.00
Labour	-\$544,900.00	-\$485,500.00	-\$492,900.00	-\$507,800.00	-\$528,000.00
Transfers to other Government	-\$13,000.00	-\$3,000.00	-\$3,000.00	-\$3,000.00	-\$3,000.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$35,000.00	-\$35,000.00	-\$35,000.00	-\$35,000.00	-\$35,000.00
Capital	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$185,000.00	-\$90,000.00	-\$90,000.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$1,211,950.00</b>	<b>-\$1,003,000.00</b>	<b>-\$1,430,450.00</b>	<b>-\$1,347,350.00</b>	<b>-\$1,367,550.00</b>

<b>62 - Agricultural Services Total</b>	<b>-\$997,490.00</b>	<b>-\$719,003.00</b>	<b>-\$1,185,453.00</b>	<b>-\$1,152,350.00</b>	<b>-\$1,172,550.00</b>
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<b>66 - Planning &amp; Development</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Service and Sales	\$48,500.00	\$246,450.00	\$48,800.00	\$48,800.00	\$48,800.00
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$48,500.00</b>	<b>\$246,450.00</b>	<b>\$48,800.00</b>	<b>\$48,800.00</b>	<b>\$48,800.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$53,300.00	-\$176,200.00	-\$78,200.00	-\$78,200.00	-\$78,200.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$282,950.00	-\$452,700.00	-\$168,000.00	-\$158,000.00	-\$158,000.00
Labour	-\$451,400.00	-\$587,500.00	-\$600,000.00	-\$618,000.00	-\$642,800.00
Depreciation Expense	-\$7,500.00	-\$7,500.00	-\$7,500.00	-\$7,500.00	-\$7,500.00
Capital	\$0.00	-\$85,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$795,150.00</b>	<b>-\$1,308,900.00</b>	<b>-\$853,700.00</b>	<b>-\$861,700.00</b>	<b>-\$886,500.00</b>

<b>66 - Planning &amp; Development Total</b>	<b>-\$746,650.00</b>	<b>-\$1,062,450.00</b>	<b>-\$804,900.00</b>	<b>-\$812,900.00</b>	<b>-\$837,700.00</b>
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<b>71 - Recreation</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$200,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$175,000.00	\$175,000.00	\$175,000.00
Service and Sales	\$14,626.00	\$14,800.00	\$14,800.00	\$14,800.00	\$14,800.00
Other	\$6,000.00	\$5,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$220,626.00</b>	<b>\$170,300.00</b>	<b>\$195,800.00</b>	<b>\$195,800.00</b>	<b>\$195,800.00</b>

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$7,750.00	-\$8,250.00	-\$8,950.00	-\$8,750.00	-\$9,250.00
Goods and Supplies	-\$8,100.00	-\$8,200.00	-\$8,800.00	-\$8,800.00	-\$8,800.00
Labour	-\$37,400.00	-\$38,500.00	-\$41,200.00	-\$41,300.00	-\$42,900.00
Transfers to other Government	-\$765,777.00	-\$227,000.00	-\$227,000.00	-\$227,000.00	-\$227,000.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$819,027.00</b>	<b>-\$281,950.00</b>	<b>-\$285,950.00</b>	<b>-\$285,850.00</b>	<b>-\$287,950.00</b>
<b>71 - Recreation Total</b>	<b>-\$598,401.00</b>	<b>-\$111,650.00</b>	<b>-\$90,150.00</b>	<b>-\$90,050.00</b>	<b>-\$92,150.00</b>
<b>74 - Culture - Library &amp; Museum</b>					
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grants	\$102,422.00	\$127,422.00	\$102,422.00	\$102,422.00	\$102,422.00
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$102,422.00</b>	<b>\$127,422.00</b>	<b>\$102,422.00</b>	<b>\$102,422.00</b>	<b>\$102,422.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
Contract and General Services	-\$1,500.00	-\$1,500.00	-\$1,500.00	-\$1,500.00	-\$1,500.00
Labour	-\$12,200.00	-\$12,200.00	-\$12,200.00	-\$12,200.00	-\$12,200.00
Transfers to other Government	-\$238,933.00	-\$242,477.00	-\$259,363.00	-\$268,175.00	-\$277,219.00
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>-\$252,633.00</b>	<b>-\$256,177.00</b>	<b>-\$273,063.00</b>	<b>-\$281,875.00</b>	<b>-\$290,919.00</b>
<b>74 - Culture - Library &amp; Museum Total</b>	<b>-\$150,211.00</b>	<b>-\$128,755.00</b>	<b>-\$170,641.00</b>	<b>-\$179,453.00</b>	<b>-\$188,497.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-\$4,471,609.00</b>	<b>-\$4,516,293.00</b>	<b>-\$6,186,973.00</b>	<b>-\$6,719,926.00</b>	<b>-\$6,683,437.00</b>



## Cash Flow

	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	2028 Budget	2029 Budget
<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$4,471,609.00)</b>	<b>(\$4,516,293.00)</b>	<b>(\$6,186,973.00)</b>	<b>(\$6,719,926.00)</b>	<b>(\$6,683,437.00)</b>
<b>Amortization Adjustments</b>					
Admin Amortization	\$73,000.00	\$73,000.00	\$73,000.00	\$73,000.00	\$73,000.00
Fire Amortization	\$210,000.00	\$210,000.00	\$210,000.00	\$210,000.00	\$210,000.00
Protective Services					
Amortization	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00
Transportation					
Amortization	\$2,750,000.00	\$2,750,000.00	\$2,750,000.00	\$2,750,000.00	\$2,750,000.00
Water Amortization	\$240,000.00	\$240,000.00	\$240,000.00	\$240,000.00	\$240,000.00
Sewer Amortization	\$205,000.00	\$205,000.00	\$205,000.00	\$205,000.00	\$205,000.00
Ag Services Amortization	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
Planning Amortization	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
ARO	\$4,600.00	\$4,600.00	\$4,600.00	\$4,600.00	\$4,600.00
<b>Total Amortization</b>	<b>\$3,542,100.00</b>	<b>\$3,542,100.00</b>	<b>\$3,542,100.00</b>	<b>\$3,542,100.00</b>	<b>\$3,542,100.00</b>
	<b>(\$929,509.00)</b>	<b>(\$974,193.00)</b>	<b>(\$2,644,873.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,177,826.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,141,337.00)</b>
<b>Long Term Debt Principal</b>					
Transportation (gravel - ACFA)	(\$131,665.00)	(\$135,551.00)	(\$139,552.00)	(\$143,671.00)	(\$147,911.00)
Transportation (gravel - ACFA)	(\$236,392.00)	(\$242,385.00)	(\$248,529.00)	(\$254,829.00)	(\$261,288.00)
Transportation (graders - TBF)	(\$836,524.00)	(\$871,856.00)	(\$908,681.00)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Grader rebuild payments (0%)	(\$571,000.00)	(\$49,067.00)			
Grader rebuild payments (0%)	\$0.00	(\$550,138.00)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Long Term Debt Principal</b>	<b>(\$1,775,581.00)</b>	<b>(\$1,848,997.00)</b>	<b>(\$1,296,762.00)</b>	<b>(\$398,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$409,199.00)</b>
	<b>(\$2,705,090.00)</b>	<b>(\$2,823,190.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,941,635.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,576,326.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,550,536.00)</b>
<b>Receivable Adjustments</b>					
Debenture - new receivables	(\$60,000.00)	(\$60,000.00)	(\$60,000.00)	(\$60,000.00)	(\$60,000.00)
Debenture - principal	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
<b>Total Receivable Adjustments</b>	<b>(\$15,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$15,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$15,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$15,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$15,000.00)</b>
<b>Inventory Adjustments</b>					
Gravel	\$1,300,000.00	\$1,050,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
Gravel Crushing	(\$450,000.00)	(\$450,000.00)	(\$450,000.00)	(\$450,000.00)	(\$450,000.00)
<b>Total Inventory Adjustments</b>	<b>\$850,000.00</b>	<b>\$600,000.00</b>	<b>\$550,000.00</b>	<b>\$550,000.00</b>	<b>\$550,000.00</b>

	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	2028 Budget	2029 Budget
<b>Cash shortfall</b>	<b>(\$1,870,090.00)</b>	<b>(\$2,238,190.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,406,635.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,041,326.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,015,536.00)</b>
<b>Commitments from Reserves</b>					
Administration	\$680,650.00				
Administration					
Ag Services					
Bridges	\$42,125.00	\$178,750.00			
Doctor Recruitment	\$35,000.00				
Fire	\$892,900.00	\$850,000.00			
Protective Services	\$67,873.00	\$30,000.00		\$110,000.00	
Utilities	\$143,500.00	\$511,512.00			
Transportation	\$50,000.00				
Gravel		\$450,000.00			
Digital Services	\$78,000.00			\$30,000.00	
Planning		\$107,000.00			
Rural Development Funding					
Buffalo Lake MR Reserve	\$100,000.00	\$200,000.00			
Rural Development Funding	\$22,500.00	\$22,500.00	\$22,500.00	\$22,500.00	\$22,500.00
Recreation	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
<b>Total Commitments from Reserves</b>	<b>\$2,162,548.00</b>	<b>\$2,399,762.00</b>	<b>\$72,500.00</b>	<b>\$212,500.00</b>	<b>\$72,500.00</b>
	<b>\$292,458.00</b>	<b>\$161,572.00</b>	<b>(\$3,334,135.00)</b>	<b>(\$2,828,826.00)</b>	<b>(\$2,943,036.00)</b>
<b>Commitments to Reserves</b>					
Administration	(\$50,000.00)	(\$50,000.00)	(\$150,000.00)	(\$150,000.00)	
Protective Services			(\$65,000.00)	(\$65,000.00)	(\$65,000.00)
Digital Services			(\$25,000.00)	(\$25,000.00)	(\$25,000.00)
Fire			(\$405,000.00)	(\$405,000.00)	(\$405,000.00)
Bridges	(\$130,000.00)		(\$130,000.00)	(\$130,000.00)	(\$130,000.00)
Gravel	(\$110,000.00)		(\$110,000.00)	(\$110,000.00)	(\$110,000.00)
Doctor Recruitment					
Ag Services			(\$80,000.00)	(\$80,000.00)	(\$80,000.00)
Rural Development Funding		(\$60,500.00)			
Transportation					
Utilities					
County Special Projects			(\$50,000.00)	(\$50,000.00)	(\$50,000.00)
Recreation		(\$50,000.00)	(\$50,000.00)	(\$50,000.00)	(\$50,000.00)
<b>Total Commitments to Reserves</b>	<b>(\$290,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$160,500.00)</b>	<b>(\$1,065,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$1,065,000.00)</b>	<b>(\$915,000.00)</b>
<b>Cash surplus (shortfall)</b>	<b>\$2,458.00</b>	<b>\$1,072.00</b>	<b>(\$4,399,135.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,893,826.00)</b>	<b>(\$3,858,036.00)</b>

## Department Summaries

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### **Administration: Driving Operational Excellence and Strategic Growth**

Administration provides coordinated, efficient support to all County departments while advancing strategic opportunities that strengthen operations, financial sustainability, and community well-being.

#### **Operational Excellence**

- Maintain current service levels through efficient staffing and consistent administrative support across all departments.
- Continue strengthening regional Fire Protection services under Heartland Regional Fire, supported by the Fire Manager and County Fire Chief roles.
- Ensure reliable support for Council, emergency management, utilities, protective services, and operations.
- Maintaining current service levels and managing Stettler Waste Management, Stettler District Ambulance Association and the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission.

#### **Resource Development**

- Proactively pursue grant opportunities to reduce pressure on property taxes and support both operating and capital projects.
- Continue developing reserves for future technology upgrades, including financial software replacement and network infrastructure.
- Maintain and plan reserve strategies to support long-term physician recruitment and regional health initiatives.

#### **Key Projects for 2026**

- Continued improvement of grant application coordination and financial tracking.
- Development of standardized administrative fees for shared and regional services.
- Ongoing reserve planning to support long-term financial sustainability and capital replacement needs.

#### **Capital Investments**

Administration supports long-term capital planning by coordinating financing strategies, including structured loan repayments for major equipment purchases. Reserves continue to be built strategically to align with asset management plans and future infrastructure needs.

#### **Looking Ahead**

The 2026 Administration budget emphasizes stability, transparency, and preparedness. The focus remains on efficient operations, responsible financial management, and supporting Council's strategic direction while preparing for growth and emerging challenges.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

The 2026 budget aligns with the 2025 to 2028 Strategic Plan by emphasizing operational consistency, expense stability, and long-term planning. Initiatives such as reclaiming gravel leases, reducing energy costs, developing a Service Level Policy, and strengthening reserve policies directly support Council's priorities. Economic development initiatives, tax incentive policies, and planning updates further reinforce sustainable growth and community resilience.

### **Protective Services: Safeguarding Community Well-being**

Protective Services supports public safety through traffic enforcement, bylaw compliance, animal welfare, and infrastructure protection across the County.

#### **Commercial Vehicle Monitoring**

- Protection of County roads, one of our largest assets through oversight of road bans, overweight permits, road use agreements, and dangerous goods transportation.

#### **Rural Crime Prevention**

- Community engagement and education initiatives that support rural safety and crime prevention.

#### **Bylaw Enforcement**

- Fair and consistent enforcement of County bylaws related to nuisance properties, traffic compliance, and animal control.

#### **Animal Welfare**

- Enforcement of the Animal Protection Act to address abandonment, neglect, and animal health concerns.

#### **Traffic Safety**

- Enforcement of the Traffic Safety Act and Regulations with a focus on speeding, signage, parking, cargo securement, and off highway vehicle compliance all to support safety in our communities and throughout our extensive roadway network.

#### **Key Projects for 2026**

- Replacement of unsupported dash camera systems in 2026.

- Consideration of new dash and body camera technology in the future.
- Continued participation in regional commercial vehicle safety checks.
- Evaluation of a traffic monitoring and message trailer, with potential provincial grant support.

### **Capital Investments**

- Investment in updated dash camera systems to support officer safety, evidence collection, and prosecution standards.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

Protective Services supports expense stability, service reliability, and sustainable population growth by protecting infrastructure, improving road safety, and maintaining consistent enforcement services.

### **Disaster Services: Emergency Management**

Our Emergency Management program prepares the County and supports our region to respond to emergencies such as wildfires, floods, and evacuations through regional coordination with the Stettler Regional Emergency Management Agency (SREMA).

### **Priorities**

- Strengthen emergency preparedness through training, planning, and exercises.
- Focus on emergency prevention where possible, not only response.
- Maintain strong regional partnerships for large scale emergencies.

### **Key Projects for 2026**

- Continued tabletop exercises and emergency management workshops.
- Gradual purchase of emergency radios to ensure communication if cellular networks fail.
- Ongoing refinement of evacuation and mutual aid agreements.

### **Capital Investments**

- No major capital purchases planned.
- Budget focuses on training, planning, and small equipment purchases as required.

### **What Is Essential**

- Continued funding for emergency planning, training, and community readiness.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

Disaster Services aligns with service stability and community resilience priorities by ensuring the County is prepared for emergencies while managing costs responsibly.

### **Planning & Development: Shaping Sustainable Growth and Community Development**

Planning and Development guides land use and growth through permitting, policy development, and regulatory enforcement to ensure orderly and sustainable development.

#### **Priorities**

- Timely processing of development permits and subdivision applications.
- Clear guidance to residents and consistent enforcement of land use regulations.
- Regional collaboration through Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks.
- Monitoring and adapting to evolving regulations for solar, wind, and aggregate development.

#### **Key Projects for 2026**

- Review and update of the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw.
- Creation of joint use planning agreements with School Authorities.
- Planning for improved public access at Buffalo Lake.
- Monitoring landfill impacts near Erskine.

#### **Capital Investments**

- New air photo for geographic information system for internal and public use.
- Some projects funded through designated reserve funds.

#### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

Planning and Development supports operational excellence, resource development, and sustainable population growth by ensuring development is well planned, compliant, and aligned with regional goals.

### **Operations: Delivering Excellence in Infrastructure and Community Services**

Operations maintains and improves County infrastructure, including roads, bridges, drainage systems, and gravel supply, ensuring safe and reliable transportation networks.

#### **Priorities**

- Deliver efficient road and infrastructure maintenance services.
- Extend the life of existing infrastructure through proactive maintenance.
- Improve communication with residents regarding road, ditch, and drainage maintenance.

#### **Key Projects for 2026**

- Major road surface repairs.
- Ongoing bridge and culvert replacements with Provincial funding.
- Drainage and infrastructure upgrades in hamlets.
- Continued gravel pit reclamation and brushing programs.

#### **Capital Investments**

- No scheduled replacement items in 2026. Preventative maintenance and shortened service intervals to extend service life of all equipment, has been implemented.

#### **What Is Essential**

- Ensuring efficient and cost-effective maintenance and improvement to all road infrastructure.

#### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

Operations directly supports expense stability and service reliability through asset management, infrastructure investment, and long-term planning.



## **Agricultural Services: Supporting Sustainable Growth and Environmental Stewardship**

Agricultural Services supports producers and landowners through weed control, environmental management, education, and agricultural advocacy.

### **Priorities**

- Roadside and waterway weed control programs.
- Gravel pit reclamation and drought resiliency planning.
- Education and support programs for producers and the public.

### **Key Projects for 2026**

- Agricultural Education.
- Oversight of parks and community mowing programs.
- Red Deer River weed management initiatives.
- Gravel pit reclamation and policy refinement.

### **Capital Investments**

- Replacement of the cattle scale to ensure continued service to producers.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

Agricultural Services supports expense stability, service reliability, and sustainable growth by protecting land, infrastructure, and agricultural viability.



### **Environmental Services: Sustaining Excellence in Service**

Environmental Services manage drinking water, wastewater, lagoons, sewer systems, and truck fill stations across the County and support the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission operations to the Saskatchewan border.

#### **Priorities**

- Reliable delivery of safe drinking water.
- Proactive infrastructure maintenance and regulatory compliance.
- Sustainable water and wastewater management.

#### **Key Projects for 2026**

- Completion of SMRWSC Phase 7 and completion of Phase 8.
- Completion of SMRWSC Donalda Reservoir and Truck Fill.
- Red Willow Lagoon project advancement.
- Expansion of rural water servicing as funding allows.
- Repairs to the Botha meter station and rural water lines.
- Planning for additional truck fill stations due to dry conditions, if provincial or federal funding becomes available.

#### **Capital Investments**

- Buffalo Sands flush points.
- Isolation valves and flush hydrants on the Botha rural water line.

#### **What Is Essential**

- Buffalo Sands flush points to protect system integrity.
- Septic receiving station planning to support wastewater management.

#### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

Utilities supports service stability, environmental protection, and sustainable population growth through infrastructure investment and long term planning.

## **Recreation and Insurance: Enhancing Community Engagement and Support**

The Recreation Department focuses on fostering community engagement, supporting rural education initiatives, and ensuring County recreational and community programs are well-managed, sustainable, and responsive to community needs.

### **Priorities**

- Rural Education and Community Programs:
  - Transition the Performing Arts for Schools program to a broader “Rural Education” focus, supporting Grade 4 students through Agriculture Day initiatives and Grades 10–12 students through Rural Health Day programs in collaboration with Ag Services, the Stettler Board of Trade, and Stettler Adult Learning Centre.
  - Expose students to future career pathways in agriculture, animal health and the medical field.
- Operational Assistance Grants and Not-for-Profit Support:
  - Review and refine the Operational Assistance Grant policy to maximize support for active, local organizations.
  - Benchmark grant distribution policies with other municipalities to ensure equity, efficiency, and alignment with County priorities.

### **Risk Management and Insurance:**

- Maintain an up-to-date and cost-effective insurance schedule for County assets.
- Reduce claims through increased staff and organizational training opportunities provided by RMA and other partners.

### **Key Projects for 2026**

- School and Community Signage:
  - Replace aging school signage across the County with larger, more informative displays.
  - Collaborate with the Stettler Town and Country Museum and Clearview School Division, pursuing heritage funding to create potential tourist destinations and geocaching points.
- Non-Profit Engagement:
  - Provide informational resources and attend meetings with local not-for-profit organizations to communicate key program deadlines and grant opportunities.
- Education and Training:
  - Continue to offer sessions on insurance, risk management, and training opportunities to ensure local organizations are well-prepared and compliant.

## Capital Investments

- None planned for 2026. The department will continue to leverage partnerships and external funding opportunities for projects such as signage replacement.

## Looking Ahead

- Planning for the 50th Anniversary of the County of Stettler Community Service Awards in 2028, which may require incremental funding.
- Ongoing efforts to support rural education, strengthen not-for-profit organizations, and enhance risk management will remain central to the department's objectives over the next several years.

## Strategic Plan Alignment

- Supports community health and engagement through educational programs and collaboration with local organizations.
- Enhances operational excellence via improved grant distribution, risk management, and insurance practices.
- Promotes sustainable community growth by investing in initiatives that strengthen rural education, public awareness, and tourism opportunities.

## Heartland Regional Fire: Enhancing Regional Fire Protection Services

Fire Services provides emergency response, fire protection, and rescue services throughout the County of Stettler through a new regional, integrated model supporting regional collaboration with our Villages and Summer Villages.

### Priorities

- Completing the transition from Stettler Regional Fire to Heartland Regional Fire.
- Equipping and replacing equipment as per this transition.
- Volunteer recruitment, retention, and training at all four County stations.
  - Supporting volunteers and their families for their commitment, with proper supports, recognition and health spending accounts.
- Replacement of aging and unsafe fire apparatus.
- Long term reserve planning for fire services.

## Key Projects for 2026

- Purchase of new brush and rapid attack units.
- One Wildfire Engine
- Replacement of Brush Trucks for Byemoor and Donalda.
- New Rescue Unit in Stettler
- Continued investment in firefighter training and safety systems.
- New volunteer recruitment.

## Capital Investments

- Replacement of critical fire apparatus and rescue vehicles.
- Investment in fire management software and safety systems.

## What Is Essential

- Replacement of outdated fire engines that no longer meet operational or safety standards.

## Strategic Plan Alignment

Fire Services supports service stability, expense stability, and sustainable growth by ensuring reliable emergency response and protecting volunteers, residents, and property.

## Closing Remarks

This budget is a reflection of our commitment to fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and community well-being. It underscores the importance of maintaining reserves to navigate financial uncertainties and seize growth opportunities. We welcome public feedback and Council's review as we move forward together, ensuring the County of Stettler remains a thriving and resilient community.



## **Council's Current Strategic Plan – Review Planned for 2026**

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Council's **Strategic Plan** serves as a guiding framework for the Council's decision-making process, ensuring priorities align with the community's needs and long-term sustainability. While it is a 4 year plan, it is reviewed annually with our new Council looking at it early in 2026.

For the **2026-2029 Budget**, this plan plays a critical role in shaping the allocation of resources, investments, and initiatives. Here's how the key components of the plan inform the budget:

### **1. Expense Stability**

Council's focus on expense stability ensures financial resources are managed prudently. The 2025 Budget reflects this through initiatives like reclaiming gravel leases, which reduce long-term costs and create revenue opportunities. Reserve policies are incorporated to prepare for future challenges, while potential implementation of a Local Improvement Tax (LIT) and energy-efficiency projects will provide cost-saving measures and new tax opportunities which align with Council's sustainability goals.

### **2. Service Stability**

The 2025 Budget prioritizes consistent service delivery, guided by the comprehensive Service Level Policy. Investments in right-sized fire equipment ensure emergency response meets Council-defined standards, especially for wildfire-prone rural areas. Funding for lagoon enhancements and wastewater metering supports growing demand while maintaining environmental stewardship. Service level evaluations tied to fees ensure a balanced approach, promoting both community satisfaction and fiscal responsibility.

### **3. Revenue Growth**

The Economic Development Plan and tax incentives outlined in the Strategic Plan directly influence budget allocations toward growth and diversification. By focusing on value-added agriculture and leveraging regional assets, the 2025 Budget dedicates resources to attract new businesses, foster innovation, and expand the tax base. Additionally, a review of the Tax Incentive Bylaw will ensure its success, reinforcing revenue stability.

### **4. Sustainable Population Growth**

The 2025 Budget includes strategic investments in initiatives to support population growth. For example, efforts to recruit doctors bolster regional healthcare and economic stability. Modifying the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and prioritizing waterline expansions enable development opportunities to align with population growth objectives. Revenue from surplus land sales further supports new residents and enhances regional growth.

## How the Strategic Plan Shapes the 2025 Budget

This Strategic Plan ensures the budget is not just a financial document but a strategic tool. Each dollar spent in the 2025 Budget is tied to the vision of a stable, growing, and sustainable community. By balancing cost management, service delivery, revenue growth, and population expansion, the Council is positioned to address both current challenges and future opportunities, ensuring the long-term success of the region.

## Council's 2025-2028 Strategic Plan

### 1. Expense Stability

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To ensure long term expense stability we will:

- 1.1. Reclaim gravel leases for future use, disposal, or revenue generation.
- 1.2. Establish and enact strong reserve policies to safeguard financial health. We will make strategic investments and borrow efficiently.
- 1.3. Consider implementation of a Special Tax or Local Improvement Tax (LIT) to address financial needs and increased service requests and expectations in hamlets and dissolving Villages.
- 1.4. Reduce energy and fuel use to lower long-term operational costs, ensuring sustainable financial management for the future.

### 2. Service Stability

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To ensure consistent, reliable, and high-quality service delivery, we will:

- 2.1. Adopt a comprehensive Service Level Policy that standardizes operations across critical areas, including grading, mowing, parks & recreation, street lighting, snow plowing, and fire services.
- 2.2. Invest in right-sized fire equipment to meet the level of service established by Council, to increase efficiency in our emergency response capabilities, particularly in rural and wildfire-prone areas.
- 2.3. Consider lagoon enhancements or alternative wastewater solutions including wastewater metering to meet increasing demand, costs and ensure environmental sustainability.
- 2.4. Evaluate service levels against service fees, promoting long-term fiscal responsibility and sustainability while maintaining the high standards expected by the community.

### 3. Revenue Growth

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To ensure long-term revenue stability, we will:

- 3.1. Develop and implement an Economic Development Plan that identifies opportunities for growth and diversification and our critical regional assets which prepare us for businesses and industries

to come that align with regional priorities.

Include a focus on value-added Agriculture business to further diversify our market.

- 3.2. Adopt an enhanced Tax Incentive Bylaw and review the success of the incentive.

## **4. Sustainable Population Growth**

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To foster population stability and regional growth, we will:

- 4.1. Develop a plan which delivers a focused effort on doctor recruitment to ensure regional viability, support our economy and healthcare access for all.
- 4.2. Modify the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) to be more subdivision-friendly to stimulate area-specific development and encourage large farms to subdivide acreages, creating opportunities for new residents and growth in the region.
- 4.3. Promote sale of surplus County land, including subdivided and agricultural land, to encourage population expansion.
- 4.4. Identify water line expansion priorities to support existing farms and promote new development.

