



REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

TO: Mayor and Council	FILE:
FROM: Edward Henley, Director of Finance	DATE: Oct. 17, 2025
SUBJECT: 2026 Corporate Budget	

Edward Henley

Prepared by: Edward Henley, Director of Finance	Report Approved: Jordan Wall, Chief Administrative Officer
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RECOMMENDATION(S) FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

- 1) THAT Council approves the 2026 Corporate Budget as attached in Appendix A with an 8.65% increase to the general levy
- 2) THAT all but \$20,000 of the unallocated special projects budget be transferred to the Infrastructure Renewal Fund.
- 3) THAT an additional increase to the general tax levy of 0.008% for the tractor backhoe thumb unit, 0.035 for two new bus shelters, 0.006% for beach access improvements, 0.008 for the new Pioneer Park dog park, 0.019% for Comox dog park shade structure, 0.008% for the McKenzie Park water improvements, 0.019% for Harbourwood Park sports court, and 0.055% for a pump track for a total increase of 0.158% be approved to increase transfers to the Infrastructure Renewal Fund.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Council can provide changes to service levels in any department to increase or decrease the budget.

PURPOSE

To present the 2026 Corporate Budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

Strategic Priority Areas of Focus	
Lenses	Fiscally Responsible – We will balance the short- and long-term financial impacts of our decisions.
Values	Disciplined Decision Making - We are responsible and transparent in our decision making.
Good Governance – Areas of Focus	Decision Making - We make evidence-based decisions focused on the best interests of the Town over the long term.
Core Services	Financial management and accountability

BACKGROUND

The 2026-2030 proposed core operating budget contains no service level changes and instead represents the cost required for the provision of the same level of services and the same staff complements as in 2025, except for additional firefighter hours as per Council direction. However, there does exist significant upwards pressure on spending. This is largely due to inflationary increases that the Town will need to account for in 2026 in the following categories:

Salary and Benefits (5.9% or \$105.32): The Collective Agreement for all local governments in the Comox Valley expired in April 2025. Due to the past Collective Agreement being a 3-year agreement that solidified salary increase just prior to the large increase in inflation, it is expected that Union salary negotiations will lead to higher per year increase than previously seen. Further, due to an again workforce the Town has in previous years used more benefits than paid to the benefits provider and a higher than normal increase in benefits cost is being seen in 2026.

RCMP (1.2% or \$21.29): The per unit cost of RCMP officers in BC has increased from \$166,257 to \$178,584 (7.4%) along with increases in Police materials and equipment. Please note that this assumes that the RCMP will agree to the Comox Council request to not increase staffing in 2026 after the proposed additional 3 uniformed officers requested by the RCMP. 3 additional uniformed officers would require an additional 6.6% tax increase.

RCMP	2023	2024	2025	2026
Cost per officer	\$207,937	\$226,390	\$243,678	\$260,361

Fire Department Expansion (0.42% or \$7.44): Increase due to interest only loan payments during construction. This amount will increase in 2027 as more is borrowed during construction and then increase further in 2028 as the final cost is converted to a loan requiring interest plus principal payments.

Further information can be found in the budget schedule attached

Capital Projects

There are eight new capital projects proposed in the 2026 budget:

- 1) The installation of a thumb for Unit #09 Tractor Backhoe. The thumb allows for the grasping of objects between the thumb and the bucket. The thumb costs \$20,000 and is expected to last 20 years. This results in a 0.008% tax increase or \$0.13 per representative household.
- 2) The installation of two new bus shelters. Each shelter costs \$45,000 and is expected to last 25 years. This results in a .018% tax increase or \$0.28 cents per shelter per representative household.
- 3) Beach access improvements including signage improvements, rubber matting for accessibility, improved surfacing at Kye Bay and Point Holmes for \$15,000 with a 20 year lifespan. This results in a .006% tax increase or \$0.09 per representative household.
- 4) Install a dog park at Pioneer Park for \$20,000 expected to last 20 years. This results in a .008% tax increase or \$0.13 per representative household.
- 5) Dog park shade structure at Comox dog park \$60,000 expected to last 25 years. This results in a .019% tax increase or \$0.13 per representative household.
- 6) McKenzie Park water fountain and misting pole \$20,000 expected to last 20 years. This results in a .008% tax increase or \$0.30 per representative household.
- 7) Harbourwood Park sports court \$60,000 expected to last 25 years. This represents a .019% tax increase or \$0.30 per representative household.
- 8) The installation of a new pump tracks at \$140,000 and is expected to last 20 years. This results in a .055% tax increase or \$0.88 per representative household.