



April 9, 2019

News Release

## **Council Approves 2020 Operating Budget Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic**

On Tuesday, April 7, Council approved the 2020 operating budget with a net tax envelope of \$7M, representing a 12.3% decrease in the total amount of property taxes to be collected by the Municipality of Jasper in relation to the 2019 tax levy. The reduction on each property owner's tax notice will vary depending on changes in individual property assessments, and the overall assessment growth in the community.

Council voted to decrease the 2019 tax levy by \$982,000 to reflect the economic downturn local businesses are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in recognition of the expectation that all taxpayers will have a reduced ability to pay.

Service cuts and changes in service levels due to the pandemic are already being implemented, resulting in an initial workforce reduction affecting 28 positions. Over the coming weeks and months, Council will determine which additional service adjustments will be required to meet the approved operating budget.

In addition to the decrease in property tax revenue, the Municipality of Jasper is also facing fixed cost increases of approximately 2% (on items such as insurance, contractual obligations and utilities) resulting in a further net decrease from 2019 operating budget.

At its March 31 special meeting, Council approved the deferral of penalties on utility service accounts and property taxes until September 1, 2020. Tax notices will be mailed to property owners in June.

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