

**Good evening,**

Thank you for being here and for those who are tuning in online. I am councillor Denise Rumbolt and on behalf of the finance committee and all of council, I am truly privileged to have the opportunity to present the Town of Happy Valley–Goose Bay's 2026 budget. This year's budget has been balanced at **\$20,370,188.02**.

Finalizing a municipal budget is never an easy task. It requires careful consideration, difficult choices, and a clear vision for the future. It is, however, a responsibility that Council takes very seriously. Our goal each year is not just to balance the books, but to strike a balance in how we invest—investing wisely in our services, our infrastructure, and most importantly, in you, the residents of our community.

Like households and businesses across our town, we continue to face rising costs. The cost of living has increased, and so too has the cost of providing essential municipal services. Despite these pressures, I am pleased to share that this budget includes **no increases** to property tax rates, business tax rates, or water and sewer fees. We know how important affordability is, and Council has worked diligently to protect residents and businesses from additional financial burden.

In that same spirit, we are maintaining several important relief and incentive programs. Low-income tax relief remains in place, as does the three-year property tax exemption for doctors. Supports for young entrepreneurs—including business application fee and business tax exemptions—will continue, as will property and business tax relief programs for not-for-profit organizations and community groups. These programs reflect our commitment to supporting those who need it most and encouraging growth, innovation, and community service.

This budget also makes meaningful investments in our municipal operations—investments that strengthen safety, efficiency, and service delivery. We will be purchasing much needed firefighting equipment, a new loader, and a portable generator for lift stations to help ensure continuity of service during power outages. A multi-purpose utility tractor, complete with mower, blower, and bucket, will improve our ability to maintain public spaces year-round.

At the arena, we are planning the installation of a centrally hung scoreboard, along with upgrades to the arena ice plant computer system. These improvements will enhance both user experience and operational reliability. We are also investing in staff training and professional development, recognizing that our employees are one of our greatest assets.

Beyond operations, this budget reflects a strong commitment to investing in our community. We are increasing our annual support to Healthy Waters Labrador and providing a one-time investment to install a much-needed washroom facility at the Birch Island Conservation Area—helping make this beautiful space more accessible for residents and visitors alike.

A new canopy will be installed at Kinsmen Park, and we will be investing in a watering system and fencing at the soccer field to support recreation, youth engagement, and healthy lifestyles.

We are also taking important steps to prepare for future growth. A \$1.3 million water and sewer infrastructure loan would be the Town's share of a \$4.775 million project if approved under the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund. This can support potential new housing development and

long-term community sustainability. Design work will be completed for a new, much-needed fire hall—an essential investment in public safety for years to come.

Finally, the adoption of a new tourist accommodation tax will give the Town a dedicated revenue source to support and enhance tourism-related projects and activities. This will allow us to reinvest directly into initiatives that showcase our community, strengthen our local economy, and create new opportunities.

In closing, the 2026 budget reflects a careful balance of responsibility and optimism. It is a budget that maintains affordability, invests in safety and infrastructure, supports economic development, and strengthens the quality of life in Happy Valley–Goose Bay. On behalf of the 14<sup>th</sup> council, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to town staff and our CAO, Nadine MacAulay, who have worked diligently to inform us and spent countless hours with us during the budgeting process. Our success depends on you, and we appreciate your assistance more than we can say.

Council is proud of this budget, and we remain grateful for the trust you place in us. Together, we will continue building a strong, resilient, and vibrant community—one that we are all proud to call home.

Thank you.

Councillor Denise Rumbolt