

TOWN OF LUSELAND

NEWSLETTER

July 2022

Council for the Town of Luseland would like to address concerns expressed with the large increase to many of your property taxes. In hindsight, the decisions made regarding taxes for 2019, 2020 and 2021 were perhaps somewhat short-sighted, but the pandemic of 2020 and 2021 was not something any of us had ever experienced, and every effort was made to be as easy on residents' pockets as possible.

In 2019, the increase to everyone's taxes was only \$57.00 unless there was something that caused the assessment of the property to go up, such as a deck or garage or the property changing hands resulting in a new assessment.

In 2020, there was no change to the base tax nor the mil rate.

2021 saw an increase of 0.5% to the mil rate, and no change to the base tax. The majority of the increase some may have noted was due to the re-evaluation of properties, where the Saskatchewan Assessment Agency adjusted property values to what they would have been if the property had sold January 1, 2019.

This brings us to 2022, when we had to pay for some of the big-ticket items that had to be undertaken, and the provincial government also raised the rates for school taxes.

We bought into the Western Regional Landfill Inc. because our landfill was nearly full and would have to be turned into a transfer station because the cost of building an engineered cell (which is what the Ministry of the Environment would have required) would be around \$1.5 - \$2 million, and only serve the community for approximately 5 – 10 years.

We applied for and were successful in obtaining a grant to help with the costs of landfill closure, so the provincial and federal governments awarded us the combined sum of \$158,576, but had to come up with the remaining \$57,675 to see the project through. A condition of the grant was that the work be completed by March 31, 2023, so the funds had to be raised this year without fail.

The sewage lagoon had never been dredged and it was time to take care of it, so last year we had Roy and Sons out to remove some of the solids from Cell 1. As with many projects, the price just kept rising each year, and we knew we had to bite the bullet and get it done. Roy and Sons were kind enough to let us pay for the work over 2 years, but it was still over \$110,000 that had to be spent on that project.

Also a large-ticket item was the streets project undertaken over 2020 and 2021, and we kept costs down as much as possible by utilizing public works staff as much as we could. We have heard from many residents that they greatly appreciate knowing the streets of Luseland are in far better shape than those of many other communities.

In addition to the large expenditures necessarily undertaken, according to the most recent census the population of Luseland decreased by about 66 residents, which means the transfers from higher levels of government decreased as well because they are based on the municipality's population. We also saw the taxable property assessment for the Town drop by \$132,650, which is a sizeable amount to lose. Our revenue sharing grant dropped by over \$20,000, and the gas tax grant is nearly half what the government provided last year.

When you also factor in the rapid pace of inflation, it just costs more to provide the amenities enjoyed by our residents.