

**IMPORTANT NOTICES AND MEETING DATES**

PUBLIC FINANCIAL PLAN  
PRESENTATION  
MARCH 23RD, 2009  
2009-2013 FINANCIAL BUDGET  
AT THE GRAND FORKS ART GALLERY  
(OLD COURTHOUSE)  
7:00 PM TO 9:00 PM  
Council welcomes everyone to attend

**ELECTRICAL RATE INCREASE**

City's basic residential electrical rate increases from 0.0692 Kilowatt per hour (KWhr) to 0.0734 KWhr. The basic commercial rate increases from 0.0805 to \$0.0853KWhr. The rate increase takes effect April 1st, 2009. The basic monthly charge is increased to \$11.13. This rate increase follows the approval granted by British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) to FortisBC and BC Hydro effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. Fortis' general rate increase effective January 1<sup>st</sup> was 4.6% reduced from 5.6% after intervention from the City and other interested parties. The City purchases 100% of the power from FortisBC. The rate increase is a flow through plus adjustments for cost increases and the variance in the respective effective dates of the City and FortisBC rate increases.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
TASK FORCE**

Mayor Taylor appointed Councillors Joy Davies and Michael Wirischagin to co-chair an Economic Development Task Force. The Task Force is designed to bring together interested parties to develop a grass roots Economic Development Plan.

**The first meeting of the Task Force will be held on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Seniors' Centre in the City Park.**

Those interested to become involved in the Economic Development Task Force should contact Councillors Davies and Wirischagin.

**NOTICE OF WATER MAIN FLUSHING**

Water main flushing will commence beginning the second week of April, 2009 and continue throughout the City until the second week of June, 2009. Flushing water mains is carried out as part of an annual scheduled preventative maintenance program to remove sediment that gradually deposits in the pipes and to help maintain water quality. Main flushing also reduces bacteriological growth, restores disinfection residuals, improves color, controls corrosion and helps to restore flow and pressures in the distribution system.

Flushing will occur between the hours of 7:00 am and 3:30 pm. As your area is flushed, you may experience a temporary reduction in water pressure

and/or discoloration of the water. These conditions are normal during flushing activities and are only temporary. Please check your drinking, cooking, and laundry water before using. To clear your water lines, simply turn on your cold water tap or outside hose bib and let it run until the water is clear - approximately 15 minutes.

If you have any questions or if you experience any persistent water quality problems as a result of this maintenance program, please call City Hall, at 442-8266 or Mike Imrie, Water and Sewer Utilities Coordinator, at 442-4148, ext. 244. Calls after 3:30 pm or on week-ends should be made to the Water Department emergency line, at 442-3355.

**GRAND FORKS FIRE/RESCUE SPRING BURNING TIPS**

- There is no open burning allowed within the city limits. A special occasion permit may be obtained from the fire department.
- Outside the city limits open burning is allowed for wood waste and yard waste. The pile is not to exceed 2 metres in height and 3 metres in width. For piles larger in size, a permit must be obtained from the Ministry of Forests.
- An area of stubble or grass outside the city limits may be burned without a permit as long as it does not exceed 1/2 acre in size.
- Ensure that there is a fire break around the burn area.
- Ensure there is adequate fire suppression and tools available.
- Ensure that the fire is patrolled at all times.

**NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL—SAVING TREES AND TAXPAYER'S MONEY!!**

Council is asking for your input on making the Newsletter "paperless" in an effort to help save City Taxpayers some valuable dollars and also to help out our Environment by creating less waste.

If you would please take a moment to fill out this small questionnaire and return it to City Hall either in person, by mail or by sending an email to the City's address information located on the front of this newsletter. We thank you in advance.

Deadline for participation is April 15th, 2009

1. Do you read the City Newsletters?  
Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Sometimes\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_
2. How do you dispose of the Newsletter?  
Garbage\_\_\_ Burning\_\_\_ Recycle\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_
3. Do you own a computer or access the Library computer? Own\_\_\_ Library\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_
4. How would you prefer receiving City Newsletters?  
By email link\_\_\_ By viewing on City Website\_\_\_  
By current mail out method\_\_\_ Not at All\_\_\_

**CITY OF GRAND FORKS**

March-April 2009

INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE 2009-2011**

Mayor Taylor organized the governance structure to allow for greater communication and liaison with the Community. Mayor Taylor appointed members of Council to be liaison and advocates on behalf of Council and the Community in the following areas of interest.

**Community Safety & Youth Services:** Councillor Appointed as Liaison: **Gene Robert** to: R.C.M.P., C.O.P. and Block Watch, Restorative Justice, Community safety & crime prevention programs, representative to the AKBLG, Member of the Youth Table, and Member of the Grand Forks Economic Development Task Force. Interests in: B.F.I.S., Selkirk College and Grand Forks International.

**Economic Development & Beautification:** Councillor Appointed as Liaison: **Joy Davies** to: Chair of the Grand Forks Economic Development Task Force. Chamber of Commerce, Grand Forks business development, Community Futures, downtown revitalization and beautification. Member of the Boundary Air Quality Committee.

**Financial Planning & Museums:** Councillor Appointed as Liaison: **Christine Thompson** to: City Budgets and Financial Planning – "Trust in City Spending". Liaison with Phoenix Foundation and with the Boundary Museum Society and other Museums. Interests in Communications, Local History.

**Outdoor Recreation & Environment:** Councillor Appointed as Liaison: **Chris Moslin** to: Chair of the Boundary Air Quality Committee, envi-

ronment and climate change. Air quality, pollution, waste collection, recycling, community clean up and disposal. Water quality and aquifer protection. Trail Society and Trails initiatives, pathways including Black Train Bridge Society, waterfront development, & Habitat for Humanity.

**Art Gallery/Arts Council & Economic:** Councillor Appointed as Liaison: **Cher Wyers** to: Art Gallery and Arts Council & Tourism. Member of the Grand Forks Economic Development Task Force & Member of the Boundary Air Quality Committee. Interests in Special Events.

**Special Events and Sports-Youth:** Councillor Appointed as Liaison: **Michael Wirischagin** to: Coordination of Special Events including Grand Forks Fall Fair & Grand Forks International. Other sports including: BMX Park and Skateboard Park, Minor soccer & Minor hockey, Border Bruins & Border Bruins Alumni, Youth Activities & events. Co-chair of Grand Forks Economic Development Task Force.

**Regional and External Relations:** Mayor **Brian Taylor**: Representative to the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary & Electoral Area Directors' Relations, West Kootenay Regional Hospital Board, Transportation, Relations with Tri-Cities (Trail, Nelson, Castlegar), MLA & MP Contacts, Provincial and Federal Government relations and contacts, Boundary Communities, Press & Media Relations and Member of the Boundary Economic Development Committee. Mayor

Taylor will also be the back-up to Committee Chairs & Troubleshooting. Special Interest Areas: Senior's Housing, Health Care, Agriculture & Local Markets. Woodlots and Community Forests. Conventions, hosting of dignitaries and community receptions.

The Terms of Reference & other details can be found on the City's website: [www.city.grandforks.bc.ca/council](http://www.city.grandforks.bc.ca/council).

**MEDIA AND CITY RELATIONS**

Council reviewed the policy on media relations governing City employees and adopted a policy that allows the freedom to communicate and at the same time have a procedure in place to ensure that all City employees are aware of the protocol in communication with the media. The prime media contact for the City is the Mayor and Councillors followed by the City Manager. The City's policy on media relations is:

"Employees may communicate with the media about specific operational, safety and prevention issues at their discretion and if that discretion is to be exercised, employees must obtain prior permission from their Supervisor, another designated Senior Manager or the City Manager.

Employees are prohibited from giving opinions to any media representative regarding City operations, City Council, a member of City Council, an employee, City Management and any appointed member of any of the City's Committees, Commissions and Boards.

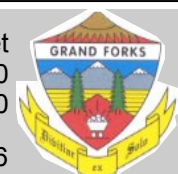
Employees may give information on facts provided such facts are not prohibited from release by the Information and Privacy Act as determined by the Corporate Administrator/City Clerk, CFO or City Manager."

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Box 220  
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Fax: 250-442-8000

Email: [info@grandforks.ca](mailto:info@grandforks.ca)

**CITY OF GRAND FORKS**

**We are on the Web!**  
[www.city.grandforks.bc.ca](http://www.city.grandforks.bc.ca)



FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN 2009-2011

Five Year Plan can be obtained from the City’s website or a copy is available from the front counter at City Hall. The Financial Plan is a document that outlines the future direction of the City on expenditures proposed and the revenues expected to finance those expenditures. The most common perception of many is that once an item is in the Plan, it is expected to be carried out or the funds have been allocated to be spent. There are many uncertainties surrounding revenues and expenditures and as such projects and activities planned might not materialize due to the timely access to materials, services, consultants, grants, provincial approvals and revenues that finance the expenditures and projects.

*It should noted that a Financial Plan does not set the Property Taxation for the years 2009 to 2013. The expected trend of taxation is provided and should not be considered approved for future taxation. A specific property taxation bylaw is required. This will be provided after April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

The primary focus of the Plan is to propose a level of taxation, fees and charges needed to carryout projects within the 5-year time horizon. The issue of property taxation, fees and charges is not decided until after the assessments have been confirmed and Council has the opportunity to consider the implications of tax, fees and charges proposed including the unconditional grant allocation and the implications of any expected changes in the home owner grant. The property tax, fees and charges amounts presented should not be considered as the increases proposed but it is only an amount planned and not finalized.

PROPERTY TAXATION AND ASSESSMENT

The basic concept in property taxation is: Assessment x Tax Rate = Property taxes.

**Assessment:** BC Assessment is a provincial Crown corporation that determines the market value of all real properties in BC. After determining correct classification, actual value and exemption status of every property, BC Assessment provides taxing authorities with an Assessment Roll which lists all properties, names of owners and taxable values of the land and any improvements (buildings). Taxing authority in Grand Forks is the City of Grand Forks. The City taxes on behalf of the School District, Hospital Districts, Regional District, Municipal Finance Authority, BC Assessment Authority and the City of Grand Forks.

**Assessment and Property Taxation Cycle:** July 1 - Valuation date of all properties done by BC Assessment Authority; October 31 - Permissive Exemptions Bylaw is passed by City Council; October 31 - Status of property must be confirmed; December 31 - Assessment Rolls & Notices are sent to all property owners; December 31 - Exemptions & taxability are determined; January 31 - Court of Revision deadline and the deadline for appeal and corrections and assessments must be completed; May 15 (approx.) - Tax Notices are mailed; July 2 (approx.) - Tax due date before 10% penalty is applied and Provincial Home Owner Grant must be claimed otherwise penalty of 10% applies; Last Monday in September - Tax Sale for properties having 3-years of unpaid property taxes.

**Property Assessment:** is classified into 9 classes. 1. Residential, 2. Utilities, 3. Supportive Housing (effective 2009), 4. Major Industry, 5. Light Industry, 6. Business/Other, 7. Managed Forest Land, 8. Recreation/Non-profit and 9. Farm Land. The 1 to 9 numbers appear on property owner’s assessments and tax notices. This indicates the tax classification assigned. A property can have multiple classifications.

COMMUNITY TRANSITION STUDY

CTQ consultant has been hired by the City based on the funding received from the Province to engage the Community in developing a Community Transition Plan. The consultants are on the job. They will be calling on individuals, business entrepreneurs and other interested parties to provide input in the development of a transition plan. A regional transition plan is also underway that includes Christina Lake, Midway, Greenwood and Rock Creek. The focus of the transition study is to recommend strategies that will move community reliant on forestry to other diversified economy.

The final Report will be available by the end of May 2009. The Report will also form the basis of application for community transition funding if the City becomes eligible.

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Transparency and accountability represent the cornerstone of a good government. Council adopted an ethics and standards policy that is to guide them in the City government for the next three years. The policy reflects the standard of conduct that this Council is expected to follow in providing good government to the Community. The policy provides the following guidance:

“The proper operation of a democratic local government requires that elected officials be independent, impartial and duly responsible to the people. To this end, it is imperative that: Local government decisions and policies are made through the proper channels of the local government structure. Public office shall not be used for personal gain and for gains of others associated with elected officials. The public have confidence in the integrity and independence of its local government elected officials.”

The complete text of the Ethics and Conflict of Interest can be found on the City’s website and can also be obtained at City Hall.

WHO SETS TAX RATES?

City of Grand Forks, Provincial Government (for School, Policing and Rural Areas); Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (for all regional services in Grand Forks this includes waste management and recycling, library, arena, pool, recreation commission, animal control, curling rink, economic development, mosquito control, west end transit and regional government administration); Regional Hospital Districts (for capital expenditures to all hospitals in the West Kootenays forming part of two Regional Districts: Regional District of Kootenay Boundary and Regional District of Central Kootenay); Municipal Finance Authority ( for providing borrowing for local governments—a very minimal charge) and BC Assessment Authority (charge for assessing properties in BC).

THE FALLACY OF RATIOS IN TAXATION

Ratio: Relationship between the tax rates of different classes (e.g. commercial and residential). It is of some use in context and meaningless on their own. Questions are asked: “Why have different rates for different classes?” The opposite table provides an illustration:

|             | Assessment  | \$ / \$1,000 | Tax Revenue  | Ratio  |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------|
| commercial  | 50,000,000  | \$ 10.00     | \$ 500,000   | 2 to 1 |
| residential | 100,000,000 | \$ 5.00      | \$ 500,000   |        |
| total       | 150,000,000 |              | \$ 1,000,000 |        |

**5 Years Later (and assume no construction), the headlines from the “La Ratio Tattler”: Commercial Tax Rates go from twice Residential to OVER THREE TIMES!** CITY OF LA RATIO Chamber of Commerce says, “We want to pay our share, but this is too much!” Business owners ask LA RATIO CITY COUNCIL, “Why is Council “anti-business?” The opposite example illustrates the fallacy of ratios:

|             | Assessment  | \$ / \$1,000 | Tax Revenue  | Ratio    |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| commercial  | 62,500,000  | \$ 8.00      | \$ 500,000   | 3.2 to 1 |
| residential | 200,000,000 | \$ 2.50      | \$ 500,000   |          |
| total       | 262,500,000 |              | \$ 1,000,000 |          |

Note that the commercial assessment has gone up and the City Council of LA RATIO kept the same revenue from property tax after 5 years. Individual property owners might see \$1,000,000. The ratio has changed, increases and decreases; however, the City’s property tax revenue remains the same unless more services are added. Council sets tax rates by class of properties and not by individual properties.

NEW PROCEDURE BYLAW

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Council adopted a new Procedure Bylaw changing the Order of business at Meetings of Council. The Order of Business at Regular Meetings is as follows:  | The Order of Business at Primary Committee Meetings is as follows:  |
| 1.Call to Order<br>2.Adoption of Agenda<br>3.Adoption of Minutes of the last regular and primary committee meetings<br>4.Registered Petitions and Delegations<br>5.Unfinished Business<br>6.Reports, Questions and Inquiries from Members of Council (verbal)<br>7.Report—Regional District of Kootenay Boundary<br>8.Recommendations from Staff for Decision<br>9.Requests Arising from Correspondence<br>10. Information Items<br>11.Bylaws<br>12.Late Items<br>13.Questions from the Public and the Media<br>14.Adjournment | 1.Call to Order<br>2.Adoption of Agenda<br>3.Registered Petitions and Delegations<br>4.Operational Discussions & Presentations by Staff<br>5.Recommendations for Consideration<br>6.Requests from Correspondence<br>7.Information Items<br>8.Proposed Bylaws for Discussion<br>9.Late Items<br>10. Reports, Questions and Inquiries from Members of Council (verbal).<br>11.Question Period<br>12.Adjournment |