

RIVERVIEW

Riverview's town sign in front of town hall. PHOTO: TIMES & TRANSCRIPT PHOTO ARCHIVE

Riverview plans to hold line on tax rate in 2018 budget

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The Town of Riverview expects to hold the line on its tax rate when it finalizes its 2018 operating budget on Dec. 11, the town's administrative officer said Tuesday.

Town council deliberated over the budget during meetings on Friday and Saturday, and will vote on its final approval on Dec. 11.

Colin Smith said the tax rate will remain unchanged at \$1,5926 per \$100 of assessed property value. The average residential home in Riverview costs \$162,625 with a property tax assessment of \$2,574. The utility budget will see the water rate rise by \$29 to \$874 from \$845 per year. Smith said the water rate increase goes toward increased expenses and a capital fund to improve infrastructure. The sewer service portion of the water bill has not risen this year as a result of an expansion project at the wastewater plant.

Smith said the town received a nice bonus as its equalization grant from the province rose to \$2.4 million from \$2.1 million last year, which amounts to an extra \$300,000. That money was moved to a capital account used for infrastructure repairs. Also, the property tax revenue has risen by \$100,000 to \$23.6 million from \$23.5 million. Property taxes from homes and businesses account for almost all of the town's annual revenue, with various other fees making up the difference. With a population of just under 20,000, Riverview is mainly a residential community that depends largely



Colin Smith, the Town of Riverview's chief administrative officer.

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on property tax revenue from homes and businesses for an annual budget of \$28 million.

Major expenditures in the budget include \$3.4 million for RCMP service, \$3.3 million for fire and rescue, \$3.9 million for engineering and public works (including snow removal), \$4.7 million for parks and recreation and \$3 million for capital projects. Smith said all departments were told to hold the line on their expenses when preparing their budgets for the year. A large percentage of the budget goes toward salaries and benefits for the town's 99 full-time employees. By comparison, the City of Moncton has 628 employees and the City of Dieppe has 195.

Smith said the budget also puts

money aside for future capital projects and \$795,000 worth of street and road improvements in 2018.

"We want to keep the tax rate as low as we can but also provide the best services we can to our citizens," Mayor Ann Seamans said.

Seamans said money is being put aside for the town's 10-year plan to improve streets, roads and other infrastructure. Money is also being set aside for the long-term plan of building a new wellness centre. She said there has also been some interest in the vacant property at the corner of Pine Glen and Whitepine Roads. The public works building that occupied the lot was torn down earlier this year, after the new operations centre opened.