



# **WARDEN'S 2026-27 BUDGET ADDRESS**

**April 15, 2026**

**Municipality of the District of Shelburne**  
**2026 – 2027 WARDEN’S BUDGET ADDRESS**  
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I am pleased to outline the plans and priorities that the 53<sup>rd</sup> Council of Municipality of the District of Shelburne will undertake in the 2026-27 fiscal year. It is important to talk not just about numbers in a budget, but what those numbers actually mean for people – for our daily lives, our families and the future of the Municipality.

This year, Council is focused on following key priorities:

- 1) Economic Development;
- 2) Housing;
- 3) Healthcare;
- 4) Infrastructure; and
- 5) Governance.

These priorities are interconnected; progress in one supports progress in the others.

**Economic Development** - Economic development remains central to the strength and sustainability of our community. It is through responsible growth that we create meaningful employment, support local businesses, and ensure the services residents rely on can be maintained and improved. By investing in economic development today, we are building a more resilient and prosperous future for everyone we serve.

In addition to providing services as efficiently and effectively as possible, one of the most important things we can do as a Municipality is create the conditions for jobs and opportunity right here at home. Therefore, we are placing increased focus on market analysis and investment readiness to ensure that strategic land acquisitions, including the Hartz Point and Highway #103 properties, as well as development opportunities, are aligned with the evolving needs of our community. This includes a proactive approach to identifying and redeveloping brownfield sites, unlocking underutilized properties, and preparing them for productive economic use.

By strengthening our understanding of market demand and reducing barriers to investment, we are better positioned to attract the right mix of residential and commercial development. At the same time, we are actively promoting Shelburne as an up-and-coming community that is open for business—one that offers opportunity, supports innovation, and is ready to welcome new investment and growth.

We also recognize that the tourism sector is a valuable economic development opportunity; one which can generate revenue, create employment, support a wide range of industries such as hospitality and local businesses and contribute to long term economic growth.

We are thrilled to announce a contribution of \$100,000 toward the cost of essential repairs to the Sandy Point Lighthouse, an iconic landmark and treasured symbol of the community.

This investment reflects the Municipality's ongoing commitment to preserving important heritage assets that support local identity, strengthen tourism, and enhance community pride in our area.

**Housing** - In the second year of implementing our Housing Action Plan, the Municipality continues to build on the momentum created through the \$1.546 million Federal Housing Accelerator Fund award. Progress is underway across several key initiatives, including the Surplus Lands Program for Affordable Housing, Community Improvement Initiatives, E-Permitting implementation, Pre-Approved Housing Designs, and the Affordable Housing Incentive Program.

This year, our focus is on moving these initiatives from planning into action-strengthening partnerships, and expanding housing opportunities that align with our community's growing and changing needs.

**Healthcare** – Our Community Development Coordinator continues to build on successful recruitment and retention activities for healthcare professionals. Efforts will also continue to focus on working with partners to address ongoing challenges such as emergency department closures and supporting long term access to healthcare services for residents.

I encourage residents to visit our website to learn more about the various healthcare options that are currently available.

**Infrastructure** – Strong infrastructure is essential for a municipality as it supports the daily needs of residents, businesses, and public services, ensures safety, enables economic growth and improves quality of life. When infrastructure is well-planned and maintained, it allows communities to function efficiently, respond effectively to emergencies, and adapt to future growth and environmental challenges.

Looking forward, the Municipality is researching sustainable water supply solutions to address the growing risk of drought and ensure long-term resilience for our residents. We are also exploring a streetlight conversion to municipally owned LED infrastructure in 2027–2028. As a first step, a consultant will be engaged to review the current streetlighting system, including analysis of long-term cost savings, energy efficiency, and the overall benefits of municipal ownership.

With respect to sewage treatment, a key priority will be the completion of the polishing wetland project, building on the progress made last year to further enhance the performance and capacity of our sewage treatment system. In addition, there will be several upgrades at the plant to increase efficiency, reliability and overall system performance. We will also be undertaking targeted sewer infrastructure projects to replace aging pipes, helping to prevent future issues and maintain a high standard of service. Lastly, we will be exploring the decommissioning of our wind turbine, ensuring it is done safely and responsibly.

**Governance** - This past year marked a significant milestone for our Municipality as Council approved its first Strategic Plan, establishing a clear framework to guide our priorities and decision-making into the future. In addition, Council adopted its first provincially compliant Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), ensuring responsible and sustainable development for our communities.

We are grateful to our residents and community stakeholders for openly sharing their ideas and vision for the Municipality and for the candid conversations during these processes. Throughout these talks, some residents stated their desire for more transparency. Council responded to these requests by inviting greater involvement in both the strategic planning and budgeting processes by residents.

In recognizing the importance of collaboration, the Municipality has also strengthened partnerships with neighboring communities. While currently working with the Towns of Shelburne and Lockeport through a Shared Services Agreement for the provision of services such as waste management and inspection services, an Amalgamation Steering Committee was established to explore the potential benefits and challenges of municipal amalgamation. These public meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month, here at the municipal office.

Additionally, in partnership with the Towns of Shelburne, Lockeport and Clark's Harbour, and the Municipality of Barrington, we have formed a Municipal Joint Services Steering Committee. This group is examining the feasibility of creating a Municipal Joint Services Corporation to deliver shared services across all five municipal units.

We remain committed to exploring all ways to enhance the economy and quality of life for the residents in our community, all the while preserving our unique identities.

## **OTHER NOTEWORTHY ITEMS**

### **Tax Exemption**

Community Organizations - The Municipality is fortunate to have so many citizens who volunteer with dozens of community organizations - from arts and culture, to sports and recreation, service clubs and various other groups. To support their continuing efforts, I am pleased to acknowledge that this budget includes \$31,376 in property tax exemptions to these organizations. They are the heart of a municipality, bringing people together, filling critical gaps in services, and strengthening the social fabric that makes a community resilient and inclusive. We truly appreciate their dedication, compassion, and countless hours of service. Our community is a kinder, stronger place because of them.

Low Income - We also recognize that these continue to be challenging times for many of our residents in paying their property taxes. Last year, we increased the exemption budget amount from \$50,000 to \$60,000; this year, we will increase it to \$65,000. By doing so, it is our hope that the Municipality can assist more residents who are the most vulnerable in our communities to stay in their homes.

## **Community Development**

Events - Over the past four years, the Municipality's Shelburne Events Committee has worked closely with the community to build three signature events: Dock Street Days, the Nova Scotia Giant Pumpkin Regatta, and Miracle on Dock Street. With a strong foundation and a growing reputation for delivering high-quality experiences, we proudly claim Shelburne as Nova Scotia's premier rural event destination. As part of this next phase, we are also increasing our focus on securing sponsorships and generating event-based revenue to ensure long-term sustainability and growth.

Community Grants – Through our budget deliberations, Council have identified and agreed to fund various organizations through partnerships and our Grants to Organizations Policy. This year, we anticipate supporting 43 organizations with a total amount of \$222,468.

**Recreation Initiatives** – The Recreation & Parks budget includes several projects related to trails and parks. The Jordan River Trail Bridge Rehabilitation project will move forward as the tender for the design-build has been awarded at a cost of \$3,094,000 plus HST (with an intent to award letter issued), with funding secured from the Province, ACOA and the Municipality. Work will begin this spring on the construction of a timber bridge that will accommodate pedestrians and off highway vehicles. The new bridge will provide a key connection in the local and regional trail system that will benefit locals and draw tourists to the area.

Other recreation initiatives include upgrades for the Jordan Youth Park and the Sandy Point Interpretive Site.

**Eastern Shelburne County Equity & Anti-Racism Plan** - The Eastern Shelburne County Equity & Anti-Racism Plan was developed, which is a joint plan between the Municipality, Town of Shelburne and Town of Lockeport. It was approved by all three councils and implementation will begin this fiscal year.

**Waste Management** – A new service delivery model has been approved for the Construction and Demolition (C&D) Site, also known as the Regional Materials Recovery Facility (RMRF), in West Green Harbour. The decision was made after careful consideration of the budget, public response, and stakeholder consultation and takes effect today. The C&D Site plays an important role in local waste diversion and materials recovery, and the updated service model is intended to support operational sustainability, efficiency, and service delivery for the region, while complying with mandatory permitting regulations. I encourage our residents to visit our website for information regarding new hours of operation and other pertinent information regarding the site. We appreciate everyone’s co-operation as we transition to this new system.

### **2026-27 Budget**

Council remains committed to maintaining and enhancing the services our residents and businesses rely on, while making thoughtful, strategic investments that reflect our financial realities.

The Municipality’s 2026-27 budget is set at \$15,429,886, as well as a capital budget of \$1,371,181.

Council’s residential and resource tax rate shall be \$1.26 per \$100 of assessment and the commercial tax rate shall be \$1.82 per \$100 of assessment.

One cent of residential and resource generates \$56,700; one cent commercial generates \$4,100.

At the end of fiscal 2026-27, it is anticipated that the Municipality’s total reserves will be approximately \$4,679,560, once all projects are completed for the year, of which a portion is pre-committed.


Council continues to prioritize responsible financial management. We have enhanced our Dynamic Economic Model, which now serves as the foundation for our newly structured budget process. With this tool, we are better able to project and plan for the Municipality’s long-term financial sustainability.

As I bring my remarks to a close, I want to speak to the strength of our team. Our CAO and Municipal staff play an essential role in everything we accomplish. Their expertise, dedication, and day-to-day efforts ensure that Council has the clear, accurate information needed to make informed decisions. We do not work in isolation; we succeed because we work together. To every member of staff, please know that your work matters and you are a vital part of this team. On behalf of Council, thank you—we truly could not do this without you.

I would also like to recognize my colleagues on Council. The decisions before us are not always easy, but we continue to approach them with respect, collaboration, and a shared commitment to doing what is best for our community. Working together as a cohesive Council allows us to move forward with purpose and integrity, even when faced with difficult choices.

To the residents of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne – our families, friends and neighbours - serving you carries real responsibility and Council is mindful of the trust you place in us. Your engagement, whether through raising concerns or sharing ideas, strengthens our Municipality and helps guide our work. Please keep reaching out. Your involvement is integral in building a community that is inclusive, resilient, and progressive. It helps shape our decisions and keeps our work focused on what matters most.

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne is our home. Together, we are not just planning for its future, we are building it for the people who live here today and for the generations who will follow. As we look ahead, I do so with a strong sense of optimism and anticipation. Let's continue to embrace every opportunity available to make a positive difference in our community and to shape the future we envision.



Warden Penny Smith