



A sister publication to **The Review**, Redwater, Alberta

Morinville advances 2025 budget with proposed 5.75% tax increase and \$21.5M in spending

By Colin Smith

The creation of Morinville's 2025 municipal budget took a significant step forward on Saturday, September 21, with a presentation of administration proposals at an all-day town council meeting.

The draft consolidated budget calls for \$21,555,334 in spending, with the revenues to cover costs to include \$14,707,585 in net taxation and \$409,893 in transfers from utilities.

The initially proposed tax increase to support the budget is 5.75%, or about \$19.95 for a residential property valued at \$350,000. That is a 1.7% decrease from

the estimated 7.45% tax increase requirement for this year agreed on in 2024.

"Administration's draft budget aligns with the strategic goals set by council, and staying the course is essential to positioning Morinville for a sustainable financial future," said Mayor Simon Boersma.

"This budget is a critical step in ensuring we are prepared for both present and future needs."

New programs proposed in the 2025 operating budget are categorized as needs-based initiatives or value-added initiatives.

Needs-based initiatives, totalling

\$536,840, are intended to maintain current service levels, close service gaps or meet increased community demand.

Proposed one-time need initiatives will include \$50,000 for a Community Needs Assessment and \$130,000 for the Facilities Master Plan.

A total of \$356,840 will go to annual spending on FCSS programming, building maintenance, parks, engineering services, customer service and service reviews.

Value-added initiatives, amounting to \$542,300, aim to meet long-term strategic goals, provide operational efficiencies or enhance residential



The biggest ticket item in the 2025 capital plan is the Residential Road Rehab Program at \$1,800,000, while the Main and Arterial Road and Alley and Parking Lot Programs come in at \$200,000.

satisfaction. Proposed one-time initiatives include the Indoor/Outdoor Pool Partnership, at a cost

of \$135,000, community sports memorabilia, \$37,000, and street banners, \$24,700.

The Centennial Fountain will cost \$80,000, plus \$9,000

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Constable Wills: new School Resource Officer at MCHS and Sturgeon Composite



Constable Tanner Wills, Morinville Community High School and Sturgeon Composite High School's School Resource Officer (SRO) speaks with MCHS Acting Principal Corinna Cormier. - Stephen Dafoe Photo

By Stephen Dafoe

With a focus on building trust, RCMP Constable Tanner Wills has stepped into his new role as School Resource Officer (SRO), determined to make a positive impact on students' lives at Morinville Community High School (MCHS) and Sturgeon Composite High School.

With 16 and a half years of RCMP service, Wills splits his week between the schools, spending two days at

MCHS, two days at Sturgeon Composite, and one day on general policing duties. Other members of the Morinville RCMP Detachment fill the SRO role in the schools in the surrounding area.

Wills explained that the SRO goes beyond law enforcement and is about being a supportive presence for students and staff, prioritizing being approachable and listening more than talking.

"It's important to show them that police officers are human,"

he said, explaining that while enforcement can seem negative, it's a small part of his job. His main priority is keeping students safe.

Connecting with students

Wills avoids spending time behind a desk to ensure he's visible and approachable. He can often be found walking the hallways or visiting the cafeteria, interacting with students. "If I'm in my

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Constable Wills*Continued from page 1*

office, there should be a student here with me," he noted. "I'm here to engage with the youth. I'm not here to check emails."

Staff Sergeant Darcy McGunigal, head of the Morinville RCMP Detachment, believes Wills is an excellent fit for the SRO role.

"He's got leadership qualities, which is clear, and he's proactive," McGunigal said. "He approaches these kids. He doesn't sit here and wait for the problem to come to him. He goes into the crowd. He's part of the school. That's exactly what we want to see."

Wills shares McGunigal's belief in being where the students are. "If I'm with a group of kids, I look for the one who's off on their own," he said, adding he isn't there to hang with the cool kids but to be there for all students, especially the ones who might feel invisible."

Combatting digital-age isolation

As he makes his

rounds at the two schools, Wills notices one growing concern – students' increasing disconnection due to technology, offering the constable the opportunity to bridge that gap by engaging students in personal interactions.

"You see kids with their heads down, feeling like nobody sees them," he said, adding even a short conversation can make a difference. He makes it a point to ask them how they're doing and then listen.

This isolation has become even more pronounced because the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional social interactions. Staff Sergeant McGunigal noted that many students are still coping with the effects of the isolation experienced during at-home learning.

"Now more than ever, I think it's important for us to deliver on our mandate in the schools with our youth plan," he said. "With that in mind, we've really made this a priority at our detachment this

year to make sure that we're hitting all of our targets with MCHS and with Sturgeon Composite."

This commitment to student well-being is why Wills was hand-picked for the critical role as SRO, where he actively addresses challenges within the school community.

Addressing bullying and promoting diversity

As a School Resource Officer, Wills takes a proactive approach to tackling bullying and promoting inclusivity. He believes in addressing inappropriate comments immediately, emphasizing that one never knows what someone else is going through. "You don't know what impact that'll have," he explains.

Wills often sees a positive shift in behaviour when he points out inappropriate comments, noting, "You can see the light come on, and they get it."

While he hasn't witnessed physical fights, he acknowledges typical rowdiness,

particularly among high school boys. "If I see them getting too rowdy, I charge over and use my police voice," he says, noting he then takes it down a tone, encouraging them to channel that energy into something productive, like joining a sports team."

This firm but explanatory approach with inappropriate comments and rough play has led to positive interactions afterward, with students greeting him with fist bumps and high fives. His introduction at a recent school assembly resulted in the loudest cheers.

Beyond encouraging a welcoming atmosphere, Wills is also committed to building relationships with students of colour, understanding that MCHS and Sturgeon Composite have less diversity than schools in larger centers.

He engages in conversations during lunch, showing genuine interest in the students' backgrounds.

"I find it genuinely interesting," he notes, adding that it

helps create a supportive environment. If students see him being positive towards a person of colour, he believes they'll understand that's the example to follow.

Staff Sergeant Darcy McGunigal supports this approach, emphasizing the importance of communication in resolving conflicts.

"In most cases, the lowest level of intervention is preferred. If we can resolve a situation like that through talking in the school, talking with one of the educators, the administrators at school, parents – obviously. That's preferred," he said.

"If we enter into a realm where perhaps that's not appropriate anymore, we do have some options. We're afforded a fair bit of flexibility and discretion under the Youth Criminal Justice Act."

Both Wills and McGunigal believe that cultivating a positive school culture is vital for the students' well-being, ensuring they have the support they need to thrive.

A challenging but rewarding role

While building student connections is rewarding, Wills acknowledges the weight of responsibility that comes with it.

"You feel the pressure being the one, potentially the one exposure, these kids have to police in their entire life. They're going to remember what I was like," he said, noting while they may not remember what he said, they will remember how he made them feel. "If they leave school with a negative opinion of the RCMP, I don't want it to be because of something I did."

Wills said he enjoys interacting with youth in a positive environment, where his presence isn't tied to a traumatic event like a car accident but rather to their everyday high school experiences.

"[They] just look at the world differently, he said. "You can see the optimism in their eyes. You can see they're excited about life."



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2025 Budget

Continued from page 1

annually, while the cost for SJB Park revitalization is set at \$29,500, plus an annual \$6,000.

Annual value-added initiatives, totaling \$236,100, include extended Morinville Leisure Centre hours of operation, a regional contract, water conservation rebate and water barrel program, waste management

education, a tree program and website management.

The proposed capital plan for 2025 includes a total of \$3,688,450 in budgeted spending for renewal and growth/value-added projects. The biggest ticket item is the Residential Road Rehab Program at \$1,800,000, while the Main and Arterial Road and Alley and Parking Lot Programs come in at \$200,000.

Utilities spending is \$325,000 for the Utility Renewal Program and \$300,000 for the Sewer Trunk Relining Program.

Parks Rehab will be allotted \$140,000, and \$100,000 will go to the new Multi-use Trail Rehab program.

Fleet replacement is expected to cost \$270,000, while \$68,450 is slated for specialized tools replacement and \$35,000 for major repairs to municipal

buildings.

"This budget reflects the second year of our five-year operating and long-term capital plan," Boersma stated.

"These long-term plans help ensure we can balance fiscal responsibility, the need to invest in our infrastructure, and our ability

to respond to growth pressures."

Morinville residents had a chance to find out more about the budget at an information session on October 8 at the Morinville Community Cultural Centre. Details were not available by deadline.

The next step in the budget process will

take place on October 15 with council budget discussions that will include responses to council questions and further deliberations, as well as the first reading of the Fees and Charges Bylaw.

Approval of the 2025 Budget is scheduled for the regular meeting of council on November 12.

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Morinville RCMP investigate church fire on Alexander First Nation

On September 30, 2024, at 00:40 a.m., Morinville RCMP received a report of a church fire on Highway 642 and Range Road 272 on Alexander First Nation.

Upon arrival, the Roman Catholic church was fully engulfed in flames. Fire departments from Alexander First Nation, Sturgeon County and Morinville were able to bring the blaze under control, however, the church had very extensive damage and is believed to be a total loss.

The Morinville RCMP General Investigations Section has taken over the investigation and will be working with a fire investigator to determine a cause. Although early in the investigation the circumstances around this fire do appear suspicious in nature.



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Amy and Kaleb Imgrund-Harvey perform in Lions Park during Alberta Culture Days on September 22. - Stephen Dafoe Photo



Artist Sarah Hall works on some art at the Morinville Art Club booth, one of the activities during Alberta Culture Days on Sunday, September 22. - Stephen Dafoe Photo



Blair Aubin, 4, colours a bookmark at the Morinville Community Library booth at Alberta Culture Days in Lions Park on Sunday, September 22. - Stephen Dafoe Photo

Gordon Lindsay Rye

November 21, 1945 ~ September 15, 2024



In loving memory, we share the passing of our much loved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, cousin and friend, Gordon Rye on Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at the age of 78 years.

He will be missed by his loving wife Faye; children Trevor (Leslie) Rye and Lannie (Karl) Reid; 5 grandchildren Emily Rye, Matthew Rye, Ken (Taylor) Reid, Kelsey Reid and Madisyn Reid; two special great grandchildren Kenny Reid and Brett Reid; his sisters Linda (Lloyd) Davison and Sarah (Con) Russell; his brother Joe (Sandie) Rye; as well as numerous extended family and friends.

Gordie was predeceased by his parents Margaret (nee McCrimmon) & Lindsay Rye, his sisters Betty Russell and Brenda Bass.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, October 19, 2024 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Gibbons Community Cultural Center, 5115 - 51 Street, Gibbons, Alberta. Let's have one last cheers to Gordie, there will be an open bar with cash only.

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Alexander First Nation grass dancer Miles M watches as chicken dancer Jerome C performs during Alberta Culture Days in Lions Park. - Stephen Dafoe Photo

Alexander First Nation's Kicking Horse Singers perform a drum song at the start of their Alberta Culture Days performance on Sunday, September 22. - Stephen Dafoe Photo

Kicking Horse Singers and dancers join with attendees for a friendship or round dance in Lions Park. - Stephen Dafoe Photo



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NEW LISTING
2 BEDROOMS IN LEGAL WITH OVERSIZED DOUBLE GARAGE

This cheery two bedroom comes with a NEW DECK, large backyard and a double detached 24'x38' garage. Pass the low maintenance front yard to enter into the living room with a large picture window with the first bedroom off the living room - could be used as a lovely office as well. Through the living room is an open concept kitchen and dining room with a double sink and pantry. In the south side of the house is the primary bedroom, four piece bathroom, and laundry room by the back door with room for a deep freeze. Downstairs is a partial basement with cold room and crawlspace for utilities. The fenced backyard has a brand new deck, access to the garage, and a sizeable garden next to the garage - if that's not enough space, there's also a driveway next to the house for RV parking! Within walking distance of parks and shops, and with easy highway access to head into Morinville or Edmonton; this home is perfect for a couple just starting out or looking to downsize. **\$249,900 Call Glenn to view.**



79.5 ACRES OF LAND IN THORHILD COUNTY

Hay and bush land about 50 min north of Edmonton boundaries. About 50 acres has been in hay since 2008. Was previously grain land. It was aerated last fall and fertilized this spring. The 30 remaining acres is mature bush (some of it was logged about 5 or 6 years ago and is growing back nicely. Nice building sites with power along the north side and part of the west side. Mostly high rolling land with very little low land. Lots of moose and deer in the area. County bylaws should allow this land to be subdivided once more. Long term renter would be willing to keep renting the land. **\$225,000. Plus gst. Call Heather for more info.**



ONLY \$149,900 FOR 2 BEDROOM BUNGALOW IN LEGAL

Looking for affordable living that's move in ready? This 2 bedroom bungalow in Legal is perfect for first time buyers, investors or seniors who aren't quite ready to give up their pets and move into a lodge. Many upgrades over the years including furnace, vinyl siding and windows. Renos in the past year include all new bathroom with stacked washer and dryer and on demand hot water heater, new counter tops and backsplash in kitchen, eavestroughs, sump pit and pump. Fresh paint throughout. Brand new carpet in bedrooms and lino in bathroom and back entrance and the living room/kitchen flooring is only a few years old. Large 75'x66' fenced lot with fire pit, flower beds, deck and plenty of parking space for a couple of cars and holiday trailer. Or build a garage if you like. Ramp is also in place for easy access with wheelchairs or walkers. Legal is a great small town that's only a few minutes north of Morinville. Move in ready! **\$149,900. Call Glenn to view.**



NEW LISTING
HUNTER'S PARADISE IN THORHILD COUNTY

109 acres of native bush land at the end of a dead end road just over an hour north of Edmonton. Property has been used as cattle pasture many years ago. Great hunting opportunities as it backs onto Cache Lake and borders crown land. Lots of wildlife in the area. Build your off grid property or tie into the grid as power runs along the road in front. Live year round, use it as a weekend getaway, hunting property or add to your pasture land. Close to Long Lake Provincial Park where there is a golf course, ski hill and great beach and boating. **\$175,000. Call Heather to view.**



LARGE THORHILD BUNGALOW

This original owner home was designed for space in 1968. At 1260 sq ft it was one of the largest bungalows of its time. Main floor features a large living room, kitchen with gorgeous satin walnut cabinets with newer corian countertops, dining room with china cabinet, 3 large bedrooms, 4 pce bath and a handy 2 pce bath at the back entrance. The owner says the one thing she wanted in a home was lots of storage space and so there are plenty of closets throughout the main floor. Bsmt features a huge family room, third bedroom, large den and cold room. Upgrades over the past 10 years include shingles, furnace, hot water tank and all upper floor windows except dining room. Backyard has a lovely covered patio, lots of mature trees, huge raspberry patch and large garden area. There is also a single detached garage and garden shed. **\$214,900. Call Janine to view.**



STUNNING 10.72 ACRES NEAR WASKATENAU

A gardeners delight with mature trees, flower beds, gazebo and garden area. Older home was added onto in 1996 and completely remodelled to make a 1485 sq ft 2 bdrm, 2 bath house with covered veranda. Features a mixture of old country charm and modern conveniences. Some original doors and light fixtures, lots of kitchen cabinets with granite countertops, gas fireplace, both main floor and bsmt laundry facilities, large back entrance. Bsmt just needs flooring to complete the family room, bath (with corner jacuzzi tub) and den. 32'x28' double heated garage was built in 2021. Even has roughed in wiring for future electric car charger. 56'x20' metal clad cold storage shed and small barn. Completely fenced with new page wire fencing. **\$565,000. Call Heather to view.**



2.24 ACRES NORTHEAST OF REDWATER

Spacious, well kept, 1470 sq ft 3 bdrm, 3 bath modular home on full partially finished basement with separate entrance to basement from outside. 40'x24' metal clad garage with 220 power. Upgrades in the past few years include septic tank (2021), shingles (2016), vinyl windows, bathroom renos and all new flooring. Lots of cabinets (and island) in the large eat in country kitchen with garden doors to back deck, main floor family room, formal living room with corner wood burning stove, large master bedroom with walk through his and hers closets and 4 pce ensuite. Two additional bedrooms and 4 pce bath complete the main floor. Basement has a 3 pce bathroom, is framed and partially drywalled and ready for buyer to finish. Lots of planted trees, flower beds and shrubs and plenty of room for a future garden. Located right on pavement, but set well back from the highway for privacy. Less than an hour to Edmonton, just about 15 min NE of Redwater. **\$272,900. Call Janine to view.**



FULL QUARTER IN THORHILD

Nice mixture of grass land and mature trees. Nice building sites in the trees with power running along the road south of this property. There was a gravel pit that has been mostly reclaimed. Nice hard pad still there which would be great for a shop and parking area. Some black dirt still piled up and a bit of gravel piled there. Seller is willing to spread this however buyer would like. Good 5 strand barbed wire fence and a dugout in the northeast corner so would make great pasture land. Only 2 miles south of pavement and close to Half Moon Lake. Build your house and have land to raise a few animals. Or use it for hunting, quadding and snowmobiling. **\$399,900. Call Heather for more info.**



LARGE COMMERCIAL LOT WITH HOME IN THORHILD

This 1.06 acre lot right in the Hamlet of Thorhild offers many possibilities for use. The 807 sq ft 2 bedroom, 2 bath bungalow has been substantially remodelled since about 2019. Main floor features a large living room/kitchen and large back porch with main floor laundry as well as the bedrooms and bath. Bsmt has roughed in plumbing and is waiting for the new owners development ideas. Upgrades include h/w tank, furnace, windows, painted stucco, metal roof and all new bathroom, flooring, kitchen cabinets, paint and flooring. The huge lot has lots of natural bush at the back along the back alley and offers lots of privacy around the fire pit. There is plenty of room to build a shop. Zoned commercial but presently used as residential so there are many options for future uses. 2 vacant commercial lots on 1st street are included in this package. Home comes completely furnished so just bring your clothes and move in. **\$235,000. Call Heather to view.**



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REAL ESTATE

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