The Corporation of the Village of Cumberland
Village Hall Meeting Minutes
2025-2029 Financial Plan

November 18, 2024, 7 p.m.
Council Chamber, 2675 Dunsmuir Avenue

Council Present:	Mayor Vickey Brown Councillor Neil Borecky Councillor Sean Sullivan Councillor Troy Therrien Councillor Nick Ward
Staff Present:	Michelle Mason, Chief Administrative Officer Andre Duinkerke, Chief Financial Officer Courtney Simpson, Director of Development and Bylaw Services Rob Crisfield, Director of Engineering and Public Works Kevin McPhedran, Director of Community Service Rachel Parker, Corporate Officer Stephane Dionne, Deputy Fire Chief

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Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and recognized the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation and offered gratitude for the care and stewardship of this land since time immemorial. Note that the live stream was not available for this meeting due to technical difficulties.

1. Agenda

Agenda for Village Hall Meeting, November 18, 2024
Therrien/Ward
THAT Council approve the agenda for the Village Hall Meeting, November 18, 2024.
Carried Unanimously

2. Proposed 2025 - 2029 Financial Plan

(a) Introduction from Mayor Vickey Brown

Mayor Brown acknoweldged those in attendance and provided the following summary of the financial planning process:

This meeting represents the culmination of a lot of work on the part of staff and Council and we really appreciate your attention and engagement with it. I wanted

to spend some time to give you some context on this budget before staff gives you the details.

For a small community, Cumberland is achieving some truly big things.
Most communities of our size do not manage their own modern drinking water system including several lakes and dams or their own wastewater system or 250 acres of community forest park along with all of our other services. But Cumberland is passionately independent, and our shared values and responsibilities keep Council focused on building a resilient future for our community, while keeping Cumberland a thriving, relatively affordable place to live.

Over the past decade, Cumberland has experienced incredible growth. Between 2016 and 2021, our population grew by 61%, and with that growth came new challenges as well as opportunities. To meet the increasing demands, we've expanded services and increased staffing, ensuring we have the expertise to manage critical areas like drinking water, wastewater, and environmental protection, all while maintaining the services you rely on.

We have also developed good relationships with our regional partners and now participate in more regional services that support our strategic goals.
Our role as Council is to balance maintaining essential services with advancing the strategic priorities that shape Cumberland's future. This year's budget reflects how we're working to achieve that balance. I'd like to share some highlights with you:

We know you want a safer and more accessible Village and fewer potholes.
Active transportation and road safety are key priorities for Council. Through our Transportation Master Plan and by listening to residents, we've identified a few areas for quick action, including Maryport, Kendal, Camp Road, and Ulverston Avenue. These projects aren't just about repairing roads—they're about creating a safer and more connected community. And whenever we tackle road work, we strive to pair it with improvements to the water, storm, and sewer infrastructure underneath to maximize value for our residents.

For decades, Cumberland lacked the tax base to support much-needed upgrades to infrastructure. The growth we've experienced has helped change that, allowing us to begin investing in critical projects like wastewater and the No 2 dam rebuild. In the coming years we'll repair two of our highest priority blocks in the Village-Penrith Avenue from First to Third including upgrades to water, sewer, and storm systems beneath at an estimated cost of over $400,000.

For comparison, last year we rebuilt Ambleside Rd, with a bit of bedrock as a complication, and the utilities underneath and that cost us nearly $600,000, the

rebuild of a just a partial block of First Street, including curbs and sidewalks but no utilities, cost us $330,000.

For perspective, a 1% tax increase generates just $44,000, if we used your property taxes to pay for this years road work, it would mean a 9% tax increase for this project alone. This is why these investments require careful strategic planning to make the most of your money. While we maintain the streets with stop gap measures like chip seal, we are building reserves to help offset costs for these improvements, particularly as grant opportunities for these types of projects are limited.

We also need to Strengthen Community Services. Cumberland thrives when residents have access to high-quality services and spaces and a thriving economy. This year, we're excited to enhance community services by hiring a Manager of Bylaw and Building Services. This new role will streamline processes for compliance, building permits, and business licensing.

We're also investing in an arts, culture and recreation planning process to ensure we have spaces where residents can gather, play, and express themselves. We have also put money aside for implementing the Solport Park Playground, and an expanded day-use area at Lake Park.

Speaking of Lake Park, one of Cumberland's biggest strengths lies in our partnerships with not-for-profit organizations that help us deliver more for less. Organizations like the Lake Park Society, Forest Society, CCSS, UROC, the Museum, Elevate and the Events Society help provide programs and services ranging from youth activities and food security to trail maintenance and development and community events. These collaborations allow us to leverage our amazing culture of volunteerism, community connection and passion to enhance services while staying fiscally responsible.

Housing remains a critical issue for our community and every other community. While we've grown considerably – so has the cost of housing – by 54% over the past years, so we're pursuing senior government funding to develop a Housing Action Plan and including housing components in our civic property renewal projects. We are also part of the regional housing and homelessness services which support our most vulnerable residents. At the same time, we're moving forward with our affordable housing project through a new partnership an expanded project and new application for funding from BC Housing. These efforts reflect Council's commitment to addressing this urgent need.

We also need to Prepare for the Future. Planning for the future is essential to sustaining Cumberland's growth and quality of life. That's why we're building reserves to manage upcoming costs like road reconstruction and future increases

in policing expenses. Because we have been so successful with this strategy, this year, we strategically reduced contributions to the Policing Reserve, freeing up $150,000 annually for current services—a decision that reduced this year's potential tax increase by 5% while maintaining enough reserves for future needs.

In closing, as your Council, we hear you. We know you want safer roads, better services, active transportation, and stronger bylaw enforcement. We also understand concerns about growth and the long-term sustainability of our infrastructure. We know that growth can be hard, change is hard, and we know that growth brings so many benefits as well, all these new people bring skills, ideas and talent to our community.

Finally, I want to thank our staff team, Council is privileged to develop the budget with staff expertise, but they are the ones who have to implement these goals and we very much appreciate each and every one of them and their hard work!

This budget is more than numbers—it's a reflection of our shared goals and a commitment to building a strong, thriving Cumberland. Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we're creating a community we're all proud to call home.

(b) Presentation from Andre Duinkerke, Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Duinkerke reviewed the municipal services funded by taxes and other fees, financial plan methodology, the property tax increases proposed by financial plan over five years with 7.83% for 2025 to bring in $345,320 in revenue. One percent tax increase equals $44,079 in revenue.

Utility fees and frontage (parcel) taxes are used to fund replacement of storm, sewer and water lines. A parcel tax is also imposed for capital debt for water infrastructure. The overall increase proposed for2025, including frontage (parcel) taxes and utility fees is 8.27% [corrected to 7.29%].

Impacts on average single family household is $250 or 7% increase, which is $21 more per month. For a median business property is $455 or 7% increase, which is $38 per month.

Proposed staffing changes include a new position of Manager of Bylaw and Building Services in 2025, and a temporary Climate Action Coordinator in 2026 funded by Climate Action funds.

Mr. Duinkerke reviewed annual contributions to reserves for linear asset (utility line) renewal; water, sewer and storm services; general government services;

recreation and parks asset renewal; and fire department vehicle and protective equipment.

In 2025, the majority of the $2.5 million capital expenditures will go toward roads, water and sewer utility line reconstruction projects at $1.329 million; then almost half a million towards water, sewer and storm system improvements including drinking water reservoir monitoring equipment and debris booms, water system pressure reducing valve project, and culvert replacements. Almost $400,000 will go towards fire rescue truck replacement (first responder).

For the $10 million operating budget, many expenditures (30%) will go toward the operation of water, sewer, storm and solid waste services, which is funded from quarterly utility fees; 19% for recreation, parks, and culture, 15% for roads/transportation services, 14% for general government, 12% for planning and bylaw, and 10% for fire protection services.

3. Question and Comment Period

There were no questions.

4. Adjournment of the Village Hall meeting to the Open House portion.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

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Mayor

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Certified Correct by Corporate Officer