


Function: Corporate Services - 03
Department: Finance – 050
Policy - 019



Budget Policy

Effective Date: August 13, 2020
Review Date: August 13, 2025
Cancel: Policy 03-050-007 (507-2019)
Resolution #: 439-2020

CAO Signature: 

Purpose:

This policy establishes the guidelines and expectations around the County’s budget process.

Guidelines:

Budget Approach

Changes to the MGA in 2015 require that going forward municipalities prepare a three-year operating budget and a five-year capital plan. The Lac Ste. Anne County budget process has been amended accordingly to incorporate the budget planning cycle. Managers are required to make a reasonable attempt to develop a multi-year budget that will require minimal changes going forward. It is understood that budgets must remain flexible to deal with changes year to year, but the expectation will remain to develop quality long term financial plans.

<u>Budget Timeline Milestone</u>	<u>Approximate Date</u>
Budget Open to Managers	June 1
Public Engagement	August 1 to September 30
Draft Submission by Managers	September 30
General Manager/Manager and Finance Review	October 1-31
Review by Senior Administration	November 1-30
Council Budget Strategic Planning Review	December 1-15
Presentation to Council	December 15-31
Presentation to Public	December 15-31
Council Budget Strategic Planning Review	February 1-28
Senior Management Final Review	March 1-15

Final date for budget amendments	March 15
Preliminary Approval	March 15-30
Final Approval by Council	April 1-15
Public Communication of Budget Approval	May

Public Engagement

The engagement of the public into the budget planning process is best initiated in the early development of the budget. The goal is to ensure that public suggestions and comments can be incorporated and addressed by Council and Administration in the budget and this is the best stage to accomplish this goal.

This engagement can take a series of different forms and Administration will implement a mixture of several mediums to maximize the impact and involvement of the public. The strategies may include:

- coffee with Council sessions
- community events
- online surveys and polls
- mail out questionnaires
- print advertising soliciting comments and ideas

The method of engagement and its extent will be determined by Council as early in the budget process and formalized by motion. This will allow Council to define a process that is flexible and reflects the desired level of engagement.

Council Engagement

Council Budget Guideline (Priorities): At budget strategic planning sessions, Council will use the information gathered from the public engagement in planning and Council’s strategic planning to set service level-based priorities for Administration in the preparation of the budget. This would also be the time to identify for Administration areas where Council would like to explore alternate or new service levels. These priorities will be established in a series of resolutions to formalize the direction to Administration.

Presentation to Council: A public presentation of the budget will be presented to Council in December. This executive level presentation will be focused on the service levels delivered and the outline of major initiative of each major functional area in the organization.

Final Approval by Council: Preliminary approval of the operating and capital budgets are slated for the first council meeting in March. It is a municipal best practice and the primary goal of all the budget changes to bring approval prior to the start of the budget year. Although, Administration is committed to providing a budget ready for approval at this time Council will

reserve final approval until linear assessment, provincial budget and over information is known in the subsequent year.

Other Documents to Assist in Preparing Operating and Capital Budgets

Funded Multi-Year Capital Infrastructure Plan

Buildings, infrastructure, technology, and major equipment are the physical foundation for providing services to constituents. The procurement, construction, and maintenance of capital assets are a critical activity for local governments. A multi-year capital plan identifies and prioritizes expected needs based on a community's strategic plan, establishes project scope and cost, details estimated amounts of funding from various sources, and projects future operating and maintenance costs. Lac Ste. Anne's capital plan will cover a period of ten years.

Asset Management Planning

Asset management planning is the process whereby a plan is developed for the management of the infrastructure assets of our community that combines multi-disciplinary management techniques (including technical & financial) over the life cycle of the asset in the most cost-effective manner to provide a specific and sustainable level of service. Changes to the MGA require that municipalities begin comprehensive asset management planning and Lac Ste. Anne County has incorporated this planning in the budget planning cycle.