

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF VISCOUNT #341 PLUNKETT TAX NEWSLETTER

Summer 2023

PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

After reviewing Plunkett's finances, council has deemed it necessary to increase the taxes on all properties in Plunkett for the 2023 tax year.

Last year, there was a *base tax* of \$150 on land and \$400 on properties. This year, on residential improvements (houses or buildings on residential lots), the base tax increases to \$450. Due to inflation, it was also deemed necessary to increase the effective mill rate slightly from 10 to 11.

A base tax means that everyone with a certain property class starts out with a base fee and the mill rate is then calculated and added to the base amount.

These tax increases will allow the RM to levy slightly more than of \$89,000 in taxes to cover Plunkett expenditures. This should be enough to cover the expenses and start to repay the amount back to the rest of the RM for expenses over the last year (currently more than \$27,000). Without considering the water & sewer costs, to run Plunkett comes in at just over \$69,000, so this increase should just about catch up on the debt, as long as everyone pays their taxes and water and sewer bills.

Last year we reported that, beginning in 2023, all properties would have an additional special levy added to their taxes. This is to cover the debt that Plunkett had prior to the transition into the RM. The government officials have instructed the RM to collect \$10,500 for 5 years to recover that previous debt. This previous debt was largely caused from grant money that was used for operational costs instead of capital costs over a number of years. It also includes about \$13,000 of direct transitional costs that also must be recovered.

Council has postponed the decision to start implementing this special levy tax until next year, allowing the community to catch up with the local debt. "Kicking the can down the road" cannot happen forever though, and it is likely that next year will be the year that we will have to begin to impose this levy on property owners. Through the increases over the last number of years to "break even" the expenses of the community, hopefully the special services levy increase will be less of a burden.

If your property was a recipient of water & sewer and you've been forgetting to pay for that service, the amount outstanding as of March 31 has been added to your tax bill. Please attempt to keep this account current, as there are costs associated to adding these service fees to your tax bill, which further inflates everyone's expenses.

“WHAT SERVICES DO I GET FOR MY TAXES, WHY THE INCREASES?”

Well, we know there's two guarantees in life, right? We also know inflation is at the highest that it's been in a great number of years. Communities simply cannot operate without increases equal to inflation levels in order to continue with the same services. To improve services means there must be an increase above inflation numbers.

To start with, when you look at your tax bill, notice that your property taxes are comprised of an education portion as well as a municipal portion. Although you may not have children in schools, it must be acknowledged that the nurses, teachers, engineers and all professionals need an education, and for property taxes to fund a portion of education in this province is just the way it is; council has zero ability to influence that portion of your tax bill.

The municipal portion of your property taxes helps to pay for the following:

- Street & road maintenance, including snow removal
- Street Lights (this is a cost of more than \$3,000/year!)
- Landfill Fees – this is to help with the funding of the operation of REACT.
- Policing and Fire Protection
- Cemetery Maintenance
- Insurance, assessment, administration and council expenses.
- Access to a provincial library, digital & audio books and the SILS system. More information can be obtained from the library in Viscount.
- And a reality is also the water and sewer utility fees are heavily subsidized by taxes.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Options for paying your taxes are:

1. In person with cash or cheque, during office hours, at the RM office in Viscount.
2. Sending a cheque. Mailed cheques must be received in office before December 31, 2023. Payments are not receipted based on the post-marked date.
3. Through your bank via e-transfer to plunkett@sasktel.net. Please include your contact information in the notes so that if the office has any questions we are able to contact you. Once payments are processed a receipt will be given or mailed to you for your records.

Taxes are due December 31, 2023.

Tax discounts are not offered for properties within the Special Services Area of Plunkett.