



Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board

Media Release

Rainy River DSSAB 2023 Budget

Fort Frances, Ontario – 2023/02/21 – The Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB) unanimously approved the 2023 Annual Budget of ~\$31.20 Million at the Regular Board Meeting held Thursday February 16th, 2023. The overall budget reflects an increase of \$3.56 M or 12.67% which is funded primarily by the Province through the four major programs, Ontario Works, Children’s Services, Community Housing and Paramedic Services. The increase in cost to the municipal share is \$483,094 or 9.96%. Much of this cost is based on mandatory cost sharing within specific programs as well as one-time costs that will occur in 2023. This increase is due in part to increased COVID related expenses, Staff recruitment, preparation of new Strategic Plan, Community Housing Plan and Children’s Services Plan and increased costs for utilities, building materials and food. The Board also elected to return \$250,000 from prior year surplus to the municipalities to reduce the increase to the municipal share to 4.8%.

The 2023 Approved Budget is reflected below:

	2023	2022
• Ontario Works	\$ 2.89M	\$ 3.25M
• Children’s Services	\$ 9.16M	\$ 7.21M
• Emergency Medical Services	\$ 9.04M	\$ 8.44M
• Community Housing	\$ 7.59M	\$ 6.73M
• Central Administration	\$ 2.52M	\$ 2.01M
Total Budget	\$31.20M	\$27.64M

The 2023 Capital Budget totals \$1.669 Million. Planned capital projects include the purchase of two ambulances, software & hardware upgrades and replacements, a new fleet vehicle, additional camera/card access installation in community housing properties, paramedic stations, resurfacing of parking lots at several housing properties, elevator, water heater, furnace replacements/upgrades, and generator installation at Lady Frances. Capital projects are funded through restricted reserves and do not directly impact the municipal share.

“The increase in cost of operations, COVID impacts and mandatory requirements for planning tremendously impacted the 2023 Budget,” stated Andrew Hallikas, RRDSSAB Board Vice-Chair, “The Board recognizes the impact on our municipalities, however we must temper costs with our need to protect the most vulnerable individuals in the Rainy River District. The homelessness crisis, increased opioid use and extreme shortage of affordable housing across the district are just three major areas that we must continue to address to make our district both safer and affordable for individuals and our municipalities. Our Board will continue to lobby our local Member of Provincial Parliament, the Hon. Greg Rickford and other Provincial Ministers to ensure equitable continued investment in the Rainy River District to meet the needs of the people and hold or reduce costs on our local municipalities.”

In the spring of 2023, the RRDSSAB will continue its partnership with Canadian Mental Health Association – Fort Frances Branch (CMHA-FF) to bring six transition beds on line. These beds will supplement the five Safe Beds brought on line in the fall of 2021 and the new seasonal warming center

which opened in November of 2022. These programs continue to build on providing a continuity of care and housing for vulnerable individuals in our district.

Ontario Works decreased, ~\$362K, primarily due to program changes with the Provincial move to Centralized Intake and a decrease in client expenses. Further provincial realignment of services will occur in fall of 2023 following a Provincial Request for Proposal for the delivery of Employment Ontario and subsequent award to allow transition as of January 1, 2024. Northeastern Ontario and Toronto are the last two parts of the province to move fully to this new transformed social assistance system.

Children's Services experienced an increase of ~\$1.95 M which reflects increased funding under the Canada Wide Early Learning & Child Care (CWELCC) to cover the costs of funding parent fee reduction to the average of \$10 per day.

Land Ambulance increased by ~\$603K which is due to staffing costs, along with increased fuel costs and insurance to provide services.

Community Housing expenditures increased by ~\$863K for 2023 due to a change in interdepartmental accounting practices for charges across programs for maintenance services.

"As we slowly recover from the COVID experiences of 2021 and 2022 and become accustomed to our new realities of delivering services under a new norm, I am extremely pleased to note that all services continued to be delivered without interruption across the Rainy River District," stated Dan McCormick, RRDSSAB, "Our dedicated staff were instrumental in ensuring the work continued both with maintenance of existing services and planning for the future. I would like to thank our RRDSSAB Board, management and staff for their continued hard work in a difficult year. This Approved Budget clearly demonstrates an ongoing commitment to ensure services are maintained and improved across our district, ensuring the safety and wellness of all our residents and visitors.

-30-

We are glad to provide you with information on newsworthy events. Please assist us in our continuing efforts to meet the needs of the citizens in our district. Our budget document will be posted for your access on our website www.rrdssab.on.ca next week. Thank you.

Dan McCormick, CAO
Rainy River DSSAB
Phone: 807-274-5349 ext. 238
Fax: 807-274-0678

Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance & Asset Management
Rainy River DSSAB
Phone: 807-274-5349 ext. 245
Fax: 807-274-0678