

Potential 5% property tax hike looming

JOHN GLEESON

Staff Writer

Municipal property taxes in Gibsons are set to go up by five per cent under a budget plan that still has to be confirmed by staff and ratified by council.

The potential tax increase is “where we’re at after three sessions” of budget deliberations, Mayor Wayne Rowe said at the March 4 council meeting.

Of the five per cent, he said, “two per cent is necessary to deal with the projects that have to be done and one per cent is going

into reserves for asset replacement. The other two per cent is a shifting of taxes for the ports function. So instead of it being paid to the regional district, it will be paid to the Town.”

Last fall, the Sunshine Coast Regional District board agreed to council’s request to withdraw from the ports function so that the Town could use the funds — \$44,000 last year — for the ongoing expansion of Gibsons Harbour.

Director of finance Ian Poole said the five per cent figure was still tentative, as there will be some “tweak-

ing” after final assessment numbers come in later this month.

“We’re not expecting to see any major shifts between classes,” he said.

A final report will go to council toward the end of the month or in early April.

Coun. Charlene San Jenko said council had to

defer a number of projects because there was not enough money available to pay for them.

In five years, she added, the Town will have reached its highest debt load, based on current projections.

“Basically our credit card is maxed out in five years,” SanJenko said.