



## TOWN OF GIBSONS

### **Mayor's Message**

January 2017

As a new year dawns, it is natural for each of us to reflect back over the year just ended, and to hope and plan for success, however we define it, in the year ahead. It is no different for your municipal leadership – except, perhaps, for the potential ripple effects of our plans and actions. We appreciate the confidence you have placed in us, and we recognize our responsibility to keep you well informed as we work on your behalf to ensure the wellbeing of our Town.

A key component of that work is the Town's budget – developing a realistic budget for the year to come, implementing initiatives throughout the year in a fiscally accountable and sustainable manner, and regularly monitoring income and expenditures. Recently, we received a comprehensive report for the first ten months of 2016, and projections to the year end. I am pleased to report that in general, expenses are down and revenues are up – a desirable position, certainly, although it also underlines the importance of fiscal stewardship, in helping to achieve that healthy balance. That is to say, while overall our operating funds are expected to show positive cash flows this year, primarily driven by an active housing market with respect to both future planning (through development fees) and current active projects (through permits and service connections), it is equally important also to note that expenditures are being well controlled by our staff.

One piece of information that will affect individual property owners as well as the Town's budget planning in 2017 relates to notifications currently in the mail from BC Assessment; you may already have received your notice, and may have seen a significant change over last year's assessment. Increases between 30 and 50 per cent will not be uncommon, prompted by the hot real estate market in the spring and summer of 2016. Property assessments do not automatically translate into a corresponding increase in property taxes; your taxes are also affected by how your assessment changed compared to the average change in your property class. Nonetheless, it is important that you review the notice carefully, and work closely with BC Assessment to ensure the accuracy of your assessment. BC Assessment's website at [bcassessment.ca](http://bcassessment.ca) provides a wealth of information that can assist you with this process.

For our part, the Town's elected officials and staff will consider the increased assessments as one important factor in upcoming budget discussions, as we analyze the budget required to provide the essential services on which our community relies. The key will be to ensure our local taxpayers receive the best possible value for the taxes and fees that you pay.

I encourage each of you to participate in this year's budget planning, by attending Council meetings and other opportunities that may arise for input, and by sharing your thoughts and opinions through email, Facebook or our website. We look forward to your feedback; we appreciate your interest in local municipal affairs; and we wish you much success in 2017.