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TAMRMS#: B05

6.14

St. Albert Library Funding

Notice given by: Councillor Biermanski

BUDGET POSTPONED MOTION:

That funding to the St. Albert Library before any additional business cases is reduced by \$30,000 to \$4,988,700.

Administration's Understanding of the Intent of the Motion:

That administration reduces the 2026 funding for the Library by \$30,000 and reduce the 2026 tax base accordingly.

SUMMARY

After council provided extra funding to extend Jensen Lakes' hours for the 2025 budget, a reduction would be a step back and will result in the reduction of services.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

With multiple efficiencies created and several recent cuts to library personnel, the library has worked hard to create a budget that has remained static over the past few years. The downtown library continues to operate on reduced operating hours because of continued budget restraints since the COVID 19 pandemic.

Of further negative impact to the 2026 operating budget is a recent decision by the provincial government to end our on-going grant for jobseekers via the CRC grant (Career Resource Center). Over the last 10+ years, the library budget has been dependent on funding for this valuable community service, which has contributed an average of \$78,000 a year to the library budget.

Beginning in April 2026, our funding will cease, which will put us in a deficit situation for our 2026 budget year. A further reduction of \$30,000 (total \$108,000) would result in a reduction of equivalent to 1 FTE (salary plus benefits)

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

None at this time.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

If approved, the Library funding will be reduced by \$30,000 which will result in a corresponding reduction to the 2026 tax levy.

Compliance & Legal:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

Even with the loss of the CRC grant funding, the library had hoped to prioritize keeping a few of the highly valued services that were funded by the grant, while still recognizing that staffing hours or cuts in other areas will need to be made. With a further cut of \$30,000, it would be impossible to keep any of these services, and we would also need to consider further reducing services in other areas such as collections or programming.

Costs in areas such as digital collections have seen a huge increase over the last few years and it is already impossible to keep up with the community demand for this format. Major cuts to services such as these will certainly be noted by residents.

Organizational:

Creating efficiencies over the last few years has resulted in several positions being terminated and the workload placed on other staff members. Workplace morale has suffered greatly, and we are seeing a lot of burnout and greater turnover rate in our leadership team.

Risks

None at this time.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

N/A

Report Date: December 1, 2025

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