

City tax hike set at 3.9%; average bill goes up \$82

BY KIM GUTTORMSON, CALGARY HERALD APRIL 13, 2010 5:42



Ald. Ric McIver was the only one to vote against the property tax increase. He has consistently voted against the city's budgets since his election to council in 2001. "I thought we could have done better, . . . should have done better," McIver said.

Photograph by: Archive, Calgary Herald

Council finalized its 2010 property tax increase Monday accompanied by some verbal jabs as aldermen settle into an election year.

In a 14-1 vote, an overall rate hike of 3.9 per cent was approved -- 4.79 per cent on the municipal portion of the bill, set last November, and a 2.9 per cent increase on the provincial side for education taxes.

It results in homeowners paying, on average, an additional \$82 in property taxes this year.

Ald. Ric McIver, expected to announce his run for mayor in about 10 days, was the only one to vote against. He has consistently voted against the city's budgets since his election to council in 2001.

"I thought we could have done better, . . . should have done better," McIver said.

But one of his colleagues pointed out that he wasn't bringing forward any suggestions to reduce the rate.

"I thought today would've been an ideal opportunity to cut millions of dollars out of the budget, but that's not forthcoming," said Colley-Urquhart, who is considering running for mayor. "This was an extraordinarily difficult time."

Council was faced with a revenue shortfall of about \$44 million going into budget talks, and over the course of the year eliminated about 100 city positions, as well as laying off more than 30 people.

At the end of a day of discussions in November, a total of \$200,000 -- or a 0.02 per cent reduction -- was removed from the budget, suggested by Ald. Andre Chabot.

Mclver's two attempts to remove items -- saving \$1.87 million by cutting grants to civic partners such as the library and science centre and cutting \$2.8 million from the overall corporate services budget -- were rejected.

Individual property tax bills will be mailed out in June.

What individual homeowners pay depends on their assessed value.

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