



LE MESSENGER

April 2025

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FIERS DE NOTRE
PASSÉ
UNIS DANS LE
PROGRÈS

A WORD FROM THE MAYORESS

Since receiving the tax bills, several citizens have reached out to us to understand this year's increase. I am taking the time to revisit the budget adoption process and the choices made by the Council.

A Review of 2024

To offset the average increase of 85% recorded in the three-year assessment role, the Council reduced the tax rate in 2024 from \$0.65 to \$0.37.

Despite this decrease in the rate, properties whose values increased by more than 85% saw a significant increase in taxes. To mitigate the impact of the increase on these properties, we also used \$216,000 from the surplus to balance the budget.

I would like to remind everyone that the responsibility for assessing property values lies with the MRC; we have no decision-making power in this area.

The First Factor to Consider

Regarding the establishment of the 2025 budget, and considering that municipalities are required to produce a balanced budget, the Council had to account for mandatory charges that it has no control over.

These charges represent a significant portion of our budget and, once again this year, saw an extraordinary increase. Here are a few examples of increases I've already mentioned:

- Quebec Provincial Police (Sûreté du Québec): 10.71%
- S.P.A. des Cantons: 295%
- Municipal Court: 600%
- Insurance: 14.39%
- Financial Audit: 13.8%
- Municipal Housing Office: 187%

To handle the increased workload resulting from the application of approximately 30 new laws and 40 new regulations from approximately fifteen different ministries since 2021, as well as emergency climate interventions and mandatory catch-up in fire safety, the Council authorized the hiring of new resources.

In the spirit of efficiency, our team has implemented intermunicipal agreements. Thanks to this resource sharing, we benefit from expertise at the best possible cost.

Furthermore, all team members work with a "multitasking" approach, which allows us to meet our obligations and maximize the services provided to the public without additional costs.

Considering the particularities of the territory (area, mountainous topography, gravel roads, and low population density), I believe the operational costs are reasonable.

Also, considering the undeniable need to surround ourselves with a reliable, competent, and professional team, the management costs are moderate. I would also like to highlight that no salary increase has been granted in 2025, both to the Council members and to the entire municipal team.

The Second Factor to Consider

With a focus on responsible management, the Council has decided no longer to use, as was the case in previous years, the surplus to balance the operating budget.

After careful consideration, we concluded that it was wiser to retain some flexibility in order to absorb the financial impact in case of dramatic situations caused, for example, by climate-related events.

The Third Factor to Consider

Is the impact of the repayment of loan by-laws on the total of your tax bill. Let's look at the by-laws adopted in 2024 separately.

Loan By-law for the Purchase of the Fire Truck

Our old pump truck no longer met the standards of the risk coverage plan that we are required to adhere to.

The Municipality took advantage of the cancellation of an order made by another fire service to acquire the new pump truck at a very favorable price on the market.

Loan By-law for the Restoration of Municipal Buildings (Subsidized work at 60%)

This by-law allowed, among other things, the restoration of the roof of the town hall, refreshing the roof of the Grammar School, and restoring the vast majority of the stained glass windows in the Bishop's Church.

Loan By-law for Roadwork

Since the grant we had applied for was not granted, and as the road resurfacing work on Pinacle, McIntosh, and Verger-Modèle was urgent, we expedited the interventions with this by-law.

Loan By-law for the Transformation of Bishop Stewart Memorial Church

I will focus more on this by-law as it raises the most questions. And that is understandable because, while it is a desirable and justifiable project in terms of the historical, architectural, and scenic value of the building, it is not mandatory in terms of municipal management.

A Brief Reminder

The Municipality became the owner of the church in January 2021. A request for assistance in covering the cost of the transformation was subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Culture. In 2022, a grant of \$2,170,000, covering 50% of the cost of the work, was granted to us by the Quebec Religious Heritage Council.

The total amount of the loan by-law—which must correspond to the total cost of the transformation—is therefore \$4,340,000, with \$2,170,000 covered by the grant and \$2,170,000 assumed by the Municipality.

Key Point: Just because the loan by-law was granted does not mean the repayments automatically begin. Rather, this loan by-law should be considered as an "authorized" amount, which can be disbursed and repaid as the work progresses. To date, the portion assumed by the Municipality is \$350,000.

For the Future, the Investment for the Municipality Will Be \$0.

The Council has indeed decided not to use taxation to cover the portion that must be spent by the Municipality in order to secure the grant.

How Will This Be Done?

A funding committee, tasked with soliciting major donors from the region, is being set up to fill this gap. If the funding committee is unable to raise the necessary funds for the work, the work will not be carried out.

Once again, the cost of future works attributable to the Municipality will not be deducted from the municipal taxes.

Vision for the Church

The long-term purpose of the church is defined in our Cultural Policy presented in 2023. It describes a multifunctional room where conferences, performances, plays, and movie screenings could be held.

The church is also identified as a place of refuge in the event of disasters.

For now, due to its inadequate universal access, the church is used for community events such as Volunteer Day, the firefighters' community dinner, the free Christmas market, the regular Christmas market, Festi'Bois, etc.

It also hosts the annual exhibition of Adélar and Loto Québec, and is occasionally rented for other events such as weddings or film shoots.

Once the work is completed and universal access is in place, it will be used much more regularly and generate rental income that will cover operational costs.

In Summary, the increase this year is explained by the rise in expenses related, among other factors, to inflation, new obligations the Municipality is required to meet, the decision not to use the surplus to balance the budget, and the repayment of loan by-laws. With the upgrading now done on the resources side and the non-use of the surplus, the tax rate for 2026 will more moderate.

If we consider all the factors that affect taxation, **the overall cost of Frelighsburg's tax bill is among the lowest of all municipalities in the MRC.**

Lucie Dagenais
maire@frelighsburg.ca

Municipal Council

The next meeting of the Municipal Council will be held on April 7 2025, at 7pm. To send a question to the Council, visualize the agenda or take part in the meeting online, go to: frelighsburg.ca/conseil

Town Hall Opening Hours

Monday to Thursday : 8:30 am to 12 pm and from 1 pm to 4:30pm
Friday is by appointment only
450 298-5133 — municipalite@frelighsburg.ca

NEWS FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

ENVIRONMENT

In collaboration with the Mont Pinnacle Land Trust, the Advisory Committee participated in the first inter-regional forum on the issues related to invasive exotic species in southern Quebec. Over 50 organizations, municipalities, and MRCs attended to discuss the current state of the situation, a coordinated action plan, effective intervention and monitoring methods.

In 2024, our Municipality formed a Working Committee on educational strategies and management of priority invasive exotic plant species (IEPS) in our territory. A Citizen Brigade has already offered several botanical workshops on identifying IEPS and organized patrols for surveillance and detection, as well as work parties for control in the municipality's parks and trails.

At each meeting, citizens of all ages join the team to learn how to recognize IEPS, record them on the citizen science platform *Sentinelle*, and participate in their removal. Want to learn more? Follow us on Facebook in the *Brigade PEE Frelighsburg* group. Want to learn how to recognize IEPS on your property? Do your part for your community? Join the Brigade for 5-7 sessions on May 8 and 15, and June 5 and 12.

Meet at Jane-Freligh Park at 5:00 PM with your gloves and pruners!

Earth Day

The Municipality's advisory committee invites you to participate in an activity organized for Earth Day on Saturday, May 3.

Clean your ditches and bring your waste between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM to Paul-Goodhue Park. The waste will be weighed for a project organized by the Missisquoi Bay Watershed Organization.

Hot dogs will be served on-site!

COMMUNAUTY

MONT PINACLE LAND TRUST

Film Screening of "Silvicola" on April 24 at 7:00 PM at Beat & Betterave

The screening will be preceded by a 5 to 7 pizza event and followed by a discussion on the film's issues with special guests.

COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Saturday, April 19 – Come have fun with us!

Here's the schedule:

From 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM: Easter crafts for young and old, a scavenger hunt for adults, storytime for the little ones, and more.

At 3:30 PM: Easter egg hunt for the little ones (bring your own small basket or bag).

ADÉLARD

Two artists in residence are arriving in April:

- Mexican artist Marcela Armas, who was welcomed last year, is continuing her project *Mirrors of the Holobiont* until April 6 in Frelighsburg.
- Cynthia G. Renard is starting a one-month residency during which, with an empathetic and scientific approach, she will focus on bats.

On Thursday, April 17, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, an exhibition of ceramic workshops conducted during *École en résidence* will be held at the Grammar School. These workshops, taught by Sara Mills and Michel Viala, involved all students at the school Saint-François-d'Assise.

Finally, from April 3 to May 11, Adélarde is conducting its annual crowdfunding campaign to fund its 2025 activities: an artistic and heritage tour and a program of parallel activities (workshops, visits, conferences).

Contribute to our mission here: laruquebec.com/adelard2025.

FARMERS MARKET

The Frelighsburg Farmers Market is recruiting exhibitors! Would you like to participate for the 2025 season?

Applications are now open. Details and registration is available on the market's website: marchefrelighsburg.com or via social media.

VITALITÉ

On Thursday, April 10, at 5:00 PM, Vitalité Frelighsburg is inviting you to its annual general meeting at Beat & Betterave.

Join the event to learn about all the activities organized by the various committees of the organization and discover upcoming projects. You'll see how active Vitalité is in the community!

Feeling the urge to get involved? There's room on the board of directors. This is the perfect opportunity to join a dynamic and committed team.

BRIMBALANTE

What's coming up in April at Brimbalante? Three intensive workshops (over one weekend) for beginner and advanced artists, featuring top guest teachers: Poetry – Physical Theater – Therapeutic Clowning. The latter includes a visit to a CHSLD (long-term care facility) to reinforce the skills learned. All details are available on brimbalante.com.

CAMP GARAGONA

Camp Garagona is looking for dynamic and committed individuals to complete its summer team.

Specialized in welcoming people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorder, the camp offers an enriching environment where fun, mutual support, and inclusion are at the heart of each day.

Whether you're a student in special education, recreation, or simply passionate about providing support, there is a place for you. Several positions, including monitors, assistants, and support staff, are available.

To apply, email coordocamps@campgaragona.qc.ca.

MUNICIPALITY

PROPOSED DRAFT REGULATIONS IN THE PROCESS OF ADOPTION

To review draft bylaws, visit frelighsburg.ca or stop by Town Hall to obtain a copy.

Note: Before the adoption date of a bylaw, you can always submit comments or suggestions for potential modifications.

Draft By-law No. 164-09-2024 concerning

agreements related to municipal works

Notice of Motion: September 25, 2024

Expected Adoption of the By-law: May 5, 2025

Draft By-law No. 172-03-2025 concerning the

increase of the working capital by allocating part of the accumulated surplus

Notice of Motion: March 4, 2025

Expected Adoption of the By-law: May 5, 2025

Draft By-law No. 173-04-2025 aiming to amend

the Urban Planning By-law No. 130-2022

Notice of Motion: April 7, 2025

Expected Adoption of the By-law: May 5, 2025

Draft By-law No. 174-04-2025 aiming to amend

the Zoning By-law No. 131-2022

Notice of Motion: April 7, 2025

Expected Adoption of the By-law: May 5, 2025

Draft By-law No. RM 460-2025 concerning peace,

order, and nuisances

Notice of Motion: April 7, 2025

Expected Adoption of the By-law: May 5, 2025

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Did you know that a public transport service covering a territory that includes several municipalities in the MRC of Brome-Missisquoi and some adjacent municipalities is available in the area? For information and registration:

By phone: 450 263-7010

By email: transport@mrcbm.qc.ca

Online: www.TransportBM.ca

FIRE SERVICE

On March 14, we had the privilege of honoring courageous firefighters. Many have already dedicated a huge part of their lives to our community, including:

- 5 years of service for Sébastien Giguère and Alex Whitehead
- 10 years of service for Pierre St-Onge and Teena Piette
- 20 years of service for Roger Courchesne, Michael Dunnigan, Guillaume Bourdeau, and Marc Fortier
- And finally, an incredible 40 years of service for Paul Bourdeau!

The honorable Isabelle Charest and the mayor presented service medals to the firefighters during a ceremony at the town hall.

We are proud and grateful to count on these dedicated individuals. Congratulations to all for your unwavering commitment!

Spring Reminder

Remember to request a permit before proceeding with the burning of your branches. You can submit your request by filling out a form on the website at: frelighsburg.ca/services/services-durgence/demande-de-permis-de-brulage or by calling (450) 298-5133, extension 127.

FEDERAL ELECTIONS ON APRIL 28, 2025

As the town hall is no longer able to host voters on the ground floor, the polling station will be located at the Bishop Stewart Church, 5 Garagona Road.