

Village of South River
Wednesday January 28, 2026
Village of South River Committee of the Whole Meeting
South River Council Chambers

In attendance: Mayor Jim Coleman, Councilors Brenda Scott, Ter Brandt, and Bill O'Hallarn in person, Councilor Robert Brooks joined virtually at 6:38 PM

Staff in attendance: Clerk-Administrator Don McArthur, Chief Financial Officer Janet Wedseltoft and Fire Chief Risto Maki all in person.

Guests in person: Township of Machar Councillors Ron McLaren and Pearl Ivens.

1. Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM River and Land Acknowledgement

The Village of South River acknowledges the Robinson-Huron and Williams Treaties on the land of the Anishinabek that we meet today. We seek to work respectfully with Indigenous people, and are thankful for their teachings and stewardship of the land.

2. There were no declarations of pecuniary interest

3. Discussion ensued on the 2026 Draft South River Machar Fire Budget.

Fire Chief Maki went through the budget on a line-by-line basis answering questions as they came up. The municipal contribution is a proposed increase of \$35,328 (14.92%) for each municipality.

The transfer from reserves is shown as \$5,000 which is going towards operating costs. The capital purchase of hydraulic equipment of \$24,500 is entirely in this year's taxation with no contribution from reserves. Reserves continue to grow and are anticipated to be slightly less than \$294,102 to start 2026 once the final year adjustments are made.

More training took place in 2025 and that trend will continue in 2026 to meet the Provincial Firefighter Certification Standards legislation. The NG9-1-1 grants have 100% covered the expense of the transition to NG9-1-1 dispatch to date and that will continue in 2026. The SRMFD was able to recover 50% of Fire Chief Maki wages under the NG9-1-1 grant for 2025 but not going forward in 2026. This is the most significant change for 2026.

One option to lower the 2026 increase would be funding the capital purchases of \$24,500 from reserves. Councillor Scott distributed the Facility Options Report from the Joint Fire Committee and stressed the importance of good capital planning. She noted that even with the municipal increase over the coming 5 years the amount of capital spending will continue to increase putting considerable upward pressure on the budget. She recommended maximizing our contributions to reserves as a priority.

The cost of the increase per average household in South River this year is \$5.76 per month and for Machar \$4.24 per month.

4. Discussion ensued on the 2025 Draft South River Machar Arena Budget.

The 2026 proposed Arena budget was presented with \$6,261 (2.04%) operating increase and a -\$501,367 (-90.6%) capital budget decrease. 2026 proposed Capital projects are the exterior corner of the arena \$25,000, two doors, mandated by TSSA, \$10,000, new electric ice edger \$7,500 and Community Centre furnace \$7,500 for a total of \$50,000. Overall, each municipality is proposed a \$247,553 (-57.76%) reduction in their municipal contribution over 2025. Revenues in 2025 were slightly higher than budgeted and expenses were lower, particularly WSIB and energy. The capital project ended well with the contingency not being spent and recovering significant savings from the surplus insulation resulted in \$80,000 being unspent. The 2024 surplus, together with this year's surplus means a combined \$140,000 is available to add to reserves. The new total reserves, if adopted would be in the \$250,000 range, similar to Fire and Medical Centre Reserves. Future capital planning includes replacing the membrane on the roof, Olympia replacement, and a compressor replacement in 2027. The roof is not able to support solar panels. Discussion also was taken about adding a recreation director position for 7 hours per week. The next budget meeting will include that day camp program, rec director position and the dance program for discussion. It was noted that significant year end adjustments for wages and energy costs will reduce the 2025 surplus.

Discussion ensued that both budgets were first drafts and were to be refined after the 2025 final numbers are available and updated for the Feb 25th Budget meeting. The goal is to pass both 2026 budgets at the Joint Council Meeting in March.

4. 42-2025 Scott/O'Hallarn

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Committee of the Whole of the Village of South River does hereby adjourn at 8:10 PM

Carried

Jim Coleman, Mayor

Don McArthur, Clerk-Administrator