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Thursday, February 19, 2026
Vol. 14
Issue 42

newsnowniagara.com
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Region finally sets 2026 budget increase at 6.3%

By Mike Williscraft
NewsNow

It was not the kind of Valentine's gift residents were hoping for, but Niagara Region set a 6.3 per cent tax increase for 2026 in place last week ending a marathon budget process.

Regional council had a forecast budget projection in January, but that proved insufficient and was sent back to the drawing board with a goal of finding $3 million more in cost cuts.

What ended up being approved was a reduced tax increase, but not quite as much as was hoped for by Niagara West's elected officials.

"This was a very difficult budget from many levels. There has been and continues to be a lot of pressure on Regions across Ontario in the areas of long-term care, homelessness, policing, etc.," said Lincoln Reg. Coun. Rob Foster.

"The general tax levy approved, 6.3 per cent increase translates into $137 for the average home in Niagara. The tax increase for Regional Departments came out at 1.21 per cent -- so, the main increases seen have been in areas the Region has little control over; including but not limited to policing. Roughly, combined with the Town's (increase) of just under 5 per cent and the zero per cent for

See REGION, Page 3

A little help from a friend

Ella Fitzgerald, left, supports her life-long friend Victoria Moustakas during a wobbly skate in Grimsby's community centre, just one of the activities at the Major Refrigeration Peach King Centre as part of Family Day activities. For more coverage of Grimsby's event, please turn to Page 17. Loree - Photo