



**BRANDON
CHAMBER OF
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Dear Members,

The Brandon Chamber of Commerce once again provided feedback to city council ahead of their City Budget deliberations held January 30 and 31, 2026. Our Vice President and Chair of the Government Relations Committee, Emilio Brown, voiced the Chamber's position on city administration's proposed municipal tax increase of 11.3%.

Our emphasis, in light of this proposed increase, included 5 calls to action:

1. Focus on essential spending and fiscal discipline
2. Recognize the broader cost environment
3. Provide predictability and a clear path forward
4. Emphasize efficiency and strategic resource use
5. Align external advocacy with essential priorities.

In the end, council approved a 6.7% tax increase and left us wondering – now what?

Our city requires significant infrastructure investments, as indicated by City Administration. Without addressing our aging infrastructure needs, can Brandon reliably attract new business, if the ongoing challenge is to manage current assets? Our members consider the nice to have, versus the need to have in their businesses each and every day and this same evaluation is expected of City Administration and Council, as it plans for the Budget.

The Chamber supports well-justified investments and, where necessary, well-reasoned tax increases. We acknowledge and appreciate the recent \$1 million provincial contribution toward Brandon's municipal infrastructure projects, which is intended to reduce taxes by 2%. However, this is money that was not expected and like surplus income, cannot be regularly counted on. We will continue to hold city council accountable for discussions regarding found efficiencies while ensuring that Administration's "asks" are coordinated with external advocacy priorities.

In the end, 6.7% is far better than 11.7%, but I wouldn't say we should be jumping for joy. While the City introduced a three-year budget cycle,



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this process has not yet delivered the clarity that our community requires. When the budget effectively resets year over year, the decisions of today are not fully appreciated as the outcomes of tomorrow. And, while I do applaud Council for engaging in some difficult decisions on budget deliberation day (a 1% salary decrease, reduced appropriation figure), I suggest a better plan going forward. Chamber members need to be able to look ahead, plan and project expenses not only to survive, but thrive.

The Brandon Chamber believes that the City of Brandon is truly a great place in which to work and live. We will continue to advocate on behalf of our members to this end.

Thank you,

Jennifer Ludwig
President – Brandon Chamber of Commerce