



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Corporate Services & Clerk

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Laura Moy, Director Corporate Services & Clerk

Date to Council: May 26, 2020

Report Number: CS-2020-14

Subject: Personnel Update – COVID-19

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That CS-2020-14 entitled “Personnel Update – COVID-19” be received.

Executive Summary

Since the declaration of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, as a pandemic by the World Health Organization and the declaration of emergency by the Province of Ontario and Mayor McNamara, the Town of Tecumseh has taken action to protect the health and safety of staff and the community we serve.

The Town Hall has been closed to direct public interface since March 18, 2020. Alternate work arrangements have been made to ensure physical distancing of staff to control the spread of COVID-19 and protect their safety. Protocols have also been developed to ensure workplaces are cleaned and disinfected.

In keeping with the Ontario government’s plan to re-open the Province, and the Ministry of Health guidance on how to safely return workers to the workplace, the Town will be making plans to re-open the Town Hall in a gradual and staged approach.

Background

As we all know, the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, and to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the Ontario government declared a state of emergency on March 17, 2020.

This allowed the Ontario government to create and enforce emergency orders, such as ordering non-essential workplaces to close, restricting retirement and long-term care home employees from working in more than one facility, and prohibiting events and gatherings of more than five people.

Currently, the Ontario government has extended emergency orders that will remain in force until May 29, 2020, while beginning to ease some restrictions as the Ontario government officially enters the first stage of its [Reopening Plan](#).

This report is intended to give an overview of the staffing arrangements that have been made as the Town continues to deliver municipal services and prepare for contingencies to be in place in order to deal with the risk of flooding to a large part of the Town. A separate report CAO-2020-02, entitled “Update on Town Services and Construction Activities,” is also on the May 26, 2020, Agenda to update Council on the status of Town services and construction activities at this time.

Comments

Administration

On March 18, 2020, for increased vigilance and caution relative to containing the spread of COVID-19, direct (face-to-face) public interface of operations at the Town Hall were closed.

Senior Administration implemented unconventional work arrangements in an effort to maintain essential municipal services and governance, as well as to keep employees safe. The arrangements that have been made include the following:

1. In response to the Province’s announcement to close publicly funded schools for the remainder of the school year and licensed daycares until at least May 29, 2020, accommodations have been made for staff who have childcare responsibilities while schools and daycares remain closed. Staff are able to use their sick/family leave time, vacation days, banked overtime, or lieu hours that may be banked based on their regular work week hours. Unpaid leave was also offered.
 - Three (3) employees submitted requests and were approved for accommodation for childcare.
 - One employee has opted to take a job protected leave for childcare in accordance with the Declared Emergency Leave (DEL) provisions in the Employment Standards Act (ESA).

NOTE: Under the DEL provisions, an employee can request a job protected leave to care for their children and there is no set limit on the number of days an eligible employee can take as declared emergency leave as long as the employee continues to meet the eligibility criteria. The ESA does not require employers to pay an employee while they are on declared emergency leave. Employees who take declared emergency leave are generally entitled to the same rights as employees who take pregnancy or parental leave.

2. A Work from Home Protocol was established to create flexible conditions to help accomplish Town services more effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic, and protect employees from the spread of COVID-19 through the creation of physical distance between staff by way of some employees working remotely and thereby reducing the number of employees physically working at Town Facilities, where possible. It has been clearly communicated that this Protocol is not a substitute for childcare and those working at home must have alternate childcare arrangements in place for dependent children.
 - Twenty-one (21) staff are currently working remotely from home
 - Seven (7) staff are working alternate days and or hours between their workplace and home
3. A work management tool has been developed and delivered to all staff members to track work accomplished on a daily and weekly basis, whether they are working from home or at a Town facility. This tool is being used to ensure accountability to Council and the public. It will also enable Administration to track time and duties performed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as we expect that there will be a reporting out to the Province at some future date.

Directors and Managers are either working in the office, working remotely, or alternating work at home within their respective Departments. There are four (4) staff working in the customer service center at **Town Hall**.

The Managers in the **Public Works, Water, Facilities, and Parks Departments** are working from their workplace. Staff reporting to the Managers in these Divisions have been provided personal protective measures, advised by the public health authorities, and are practicing safe distancing, including only one person in a vehicle. Recently, two quad cabs were retrofitted with plexi-glass screens to allow for passengers.

In the **Recreation Department**, Facility Attendants are continuing to work on inside cleaning and maintenance, as well as cleaning other facilities as required. Hours of works for the Part-time Facility Attendants have been significantly reduced; some staff are currently only being scheduled to clean and disinfect other facilities. Canteen Staff were provided notice of layoff in accordance with their Collective Agreement. There is the equivalent of one (1) Full-time Staff member in the office at the Arena.

The seven (7) School Crossing Guards and three (3) Alternate Crossing Guards have not been working since the closure of all schools.

Summer Student Program

Normally at this time of year, the Town would be recruiting nearly 60 students to work during the summer months. The summer student program has been funded in part by the Federal Government's Canada Summer Jobs Program, which ordinarily provides funding of up to fifty percent (50%) of the minimum hourly wage, for approved student positions. The Town has been successful at receiving funding for more than half of the student positions over the last three years.

In late April, the Federal Government announced measures to assist students and young people who are experiencing serious challenges finding work due to the COVID-19 pandemic through temporary changes to the Canada Summer Jobs program, including:

- an increase to the wage subsidy of up to one hundred percent (100%) of the minimum hourly wage for each employee;
- an extension to the end date for employment to February 28, 2021;
- allowing employers to adapt their projects and job activities to support essential services; and
- allowing employers to hire staff on a part-time basis for up to 16 weeks, or full-time (35 hours/week) for up to 8 weeks.

The Town was informed by local MP, Irek Kusmierczyk, that the Town had been approved for up to 35 student positions under the Town's 2020 application submitted at the beginning of this year, prior to the pandemic.

Under the current conditions, we will not be operating the pool this summer and as such we will not be hiring lifeguards. Similarly, summer day camp staff have not been hired to run the recreation programs.

Bringing on students to assist with parks maintenance (9) and in the Public Works (4) and Water (2) Departments has been deferred until such time as we can safely do so. Student positions hired in 2020 to assist in the Parks area have been reduced in number, and will be funded up to the minimum wage (\$14/hour) by the Canada Summer Jobs Program, with minimal cost to the Town.

Arrangements have been made during the current COVID-19 conditions to physical distance seasonal and full-time staff in the Parks, Public Works and Water Departments, including only one person per vehicle, unless other safety equipment is installed, i.e. plexi-glass screens. Student positions in the Parks Department will commence as early as May 25 with the same physical distancing protocols through weekend and evening work assignments to assist with maintaining turf in the parks, sports fields, boulevards and roadside maintenance. Turf can be cut on weekends and evenings as there are no organized sports or activities occurring at this time. To brighten the Town, limited flower planting will be undertaken as can be maintained by staff and students while observing physical distancing.

Cooperative Education Students (4) to assist with the planning of virtual recreation programs and preparatory planning for future events will be starting as early as June 1. Cooperative Education Students (5) to assist with various projects planned by the Financial Services, Information & Communication Services and Corporate Services may also begin during the summer months where adhering to physical distancing protocols in the workplace is possible.

Senior Administration, in consultations with the Union Leadership, feel a total of 24 student positions can safely and productively be accommodated over the coming months while maintaining social/physical distancing requirements so that they and our workforce remain safe from the threat of COVID-19.

Protocols

Administration is closely monitoring the coronavirus outbreak in collaboration with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), Ministry of Health, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. Protocols have been developed to protect the health and safety of staff with respect to the following, as well as to ensure effective and efficient performance of their duties:

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Accommodation for Childcare
- Exposure to COVID-19
- Working from Home
- Technology Device User Agreement

Return to the Workplace

Administration is monitoring the Ontario Government's [Reopening Plan](#) which will be in a gradual and staged approach, and the [Ministry of Health Guidance](#) (sector-specific), developed to assist employers with planning and preparing for their gradual reopening and to better understand how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by protecting their workers, customers and the general public.

Re-opening of the Town Hall and allowing direct public interface (face to face/ in-person) will be planned in keeping with the Province's Reopening Plan and the Ministry of Health Guidance, in addition to consultation with the WECHU and our own staff. This will be the subject of a separate report to Council.

Consultations

All Departments

Financial Implications

The Town's complement of full-time employees remains in force and related salary and benefits are within budget.

As at week ending May 9, Administration has amassed 2,051 hours towards COVID-19 tasks. This equates to 186 hours per week, or the equivalent of close to 5.5 employees fully dedicated over the course of this time. The bulk of this time has been incurred either by salaried staff or during regular work hours, so that the financial impact to the Town will be minimal.

Cost containment is made possible through the identification of essential and non-essential services and the decision to defer or postpone administrative resources towards non-essential services.

Non-budgeted personnel costs that largely impact part-time employees and include wages of employees that have been redeployed to perform facility cleaning and maintenance total \$31,000 to date.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that Tecumseh’s current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh’s plans and priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town’s “continuous improvement” approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town’s leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable

Website Social Media News Release Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Laura Moy, Dipl. M.M., CMMIII HR Professional
Director Corporate Services & Clerk

Reviewed by:

Shaun Fuerth, BCS
Director Information & Communication Services

Reviewed by:

Wade Bondy
Director Fire Services & Fire Chief, C.E.M.C.

Reviewed by:

Phil Bartnik, P.Eng.
Director Public Works & Environmental Services

Reviewed by:

Brian Hillman, MA, MCIP, RPP
Director Planning & Building Services

Reviewed by:

Paul Anthony, RRFA

Director Parks & Recreation Services

Reviewed by:

Tom Kitsos, CPA, CMA, BComm
Deputy Treasurer & Tax Collector

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
------------------------------	----------------------------

None	
------	--