

Report to Council

Report Title: COVID-19 Municipal Response - June 22, 2021 Update

Prepared By: Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk

Department: Clerk's

Date: June 22, 2021

Report Number: CLK2021-16 **File Number:** C11CL, P03

Attachments: Information Bulletin –June 9, 2021
Information Bulletin – May 19, 2021

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number CLK2021-16 - COVID-19 Municipal Response – June 22, 2021 Update, prepared by Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk for information purposes and further confirms and ratifies all operational decisions, procedures, and cancellations put in place by staff, and the Municipal Emergency Control Group in response for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report:

Background:

Staff have brought forward 15 COVID-19 Municipal Response Reports during the months of March to December 2020, January to May 2021 explaining the departmental responses and decisions taken by the Municipality as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On May 20, 2021 the Provincial government, released its [Roadmap to Reopen](#), a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures based on the provincewide vaccination rate and improvements in key public health and health care indicators. The Province also announced that additional recreational amenities would reopen May 22, 2021 with restrictions in place (physical distancing), including golf courses and driving ranges, soccer and other sports fields, tennis and basketball courts, splash and spray pads and skate parks. Outdoor gatherings were also extended to five (5) people. As a result of the announcement, the Municipality shared the update on our website and social media accounts to inform the public of which recreational amenities were reopening to the public.

On May 19, 2021 staff released another [Information Bulletin](#) regarding the additional extension of the Provincial Stay at Home Order and Declaration of Emergency until June 2, 2021 due to the continued risks associated with COVID-19 variants. The Information Bulletin also referenced the impacts to municipal services, including the reopening of recreational amenities and which facilities remained closed until further notice, as well as a reminder to support local businesses and the Stay at Home Order Enforcement measures in place.

The Provincial Stay at Home Order and Declaration of Emergency both expired on June 2, 2021; however the Orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act* remain in effect. All other public health and workplace measures remain in place provincially until Ontario enters Step One of the Roadmap to Reopen.

On June 7, 2021 the Province [announced](#) that Ontario would enter into Step One of the Roadmap on June 11, 2021. As a result of the announcement, staff released another [Information Bulletin](#) on June 9, 2021 describing the impact on municipal services and facilities.

The Province and Grey Bruce Health Unit continue vaccine distribution, and re-evaluate distribution plans as a result of available vaccine supply. The Municipality continues to receive updates on the local vaccination plan through the Grey Bruce Health Unit's Vaccine Task Force, and assist in communications and providing support and education throughout the implementation. The Health Unit continues to distribute communications on the vaccine roll-out plan, including the age groups of those eligible to [book appointments](#) to receive the vaccine. The Health Unit further includes the total number of vaccinations administered on its [Vaccines webpage](#), and in their Situation Reports listing the number of COVID-19 cases. To date 12,5393 vaccines have been administered in Grey Bruce. Some individuals are also eligible to book their second vaccine dose in accordance with the Provincial Government's [accelerated second dose guidelines](#).

Analysis:

The Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) continues to meet regularly to address each department's responsibilities, requirements, and proactive measures that have been taken in response to COVID-19. To date, the MECG has met 45 times, most recently on June 8, 2021, and have another meeting scheduled for June 22, 2021. The Grey Bruce Health Unit and South Bruce O.P.P. also participate in the MECG meetings to provide updates and required information related to appropriate actions in response to the pandemic.

Communications to Date:

The Municipality continues to be diligent in maintaining transparent and timely communication to the public throughout the pandemic. A number of news items, and social media posts have been distributed to residents daily regarding operational decisions, which will be discussed further under the Departmental Responses portion of this report.

Staff continue to spread awareness on the importance of following COVID-19 protocol, advice from the Grey Bruce Health Unit, and the Provincial Government through social media and the Municipality's [COVID-19 Updates webpage](#). Additional visual/graphic communications continue to be launched on the Municipality's social media accounts on a regular basis. Communications were further shared informing residents of the [Provincial Roadmap to Reopening Plan](#).

The MECG discussed communications that were shared on social media and the Municipality's Community Engagement Website, Build Your Brockton, to encourage a positive atmosphere and provide support to residents and businesses as a result of COVID-19 fatigue. Staff launched a [Coping With COVID project](#) inquiring on ways residents have been coping with the pandemic, as well as a map to pin residents' favourite places in Brockton they have enjoyed while spending more time at home such as restaurants or trails, and a forum to interact with fellow community members. Staff also launched a [Be Active Brockton project](#) featuring

recreation activities that residents can participate in at-home, which will be updated with new family activities, games or exercise routines by the Recreation Programmer.

Staff also advertised social media campaigns encouraging residents to shop local using online or curbside pickup to support Brockton's economy, and safety shop inside stores once the Step One Reopening Roadmap began.

On May 19, 2021 the Municipality issued a new [Information Bulletin](#) regarding the extension of the Provincial Stay at Home Order and Declaration of Emergency until June 2, 2021 and the impacts to municipal services, including reopening of certain recreational amenities.

On June 9, 2021 the Municipality released another [Information Bulletin](#) regarding entering Step One of the Reopening Roadmap as of June 11, 2021 and the impact on municipal services and facilities.

The Municipal Office has reopened as of June 14, 2021. The Recreation Office continues to remain closed. Residents are encouraged to contact staff by email or phone for inquiries, and appointments can be made for certain services. Additional measures are included in the Departmental Responses of this report.

Staff continue to broadcast Council, Court of Revision, and Committee of Adjustment Meetings through Zoom Video Conferencing and livestream the meetings to YouTube. To date 45 meetings have been broadcast (including the 2020 Meetings). The full recordings of the 2020 meetings, and the January to June 2021 meetings are all available on YouTube. To date the 2021 meetings have received a combined total of 1,419 views.

Departmental Responses:

Administration:

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) continues to maintain communication with Mayor Peabody, Bruce County CAO's, the Grey Bruce Health Unit, South Bruce Grey Health Centre, South Bruce O.P.P., and the County of Bruce on regular basis.

The CAO continues to meet regularly with Department Heads and staff to revise any protocols, plans and additional measures that need to be taken to ensure safety. New PPE guidelines were introduced regarding the requirement to wear safety glasses and a face covering if staff are working within 2 metres of each other. Communication was shared with all departments, and supplies have been ordered to maintain everyone's health and safety.

Three (3) pandemic policies were updated and adopted by By-Law at the June 8, 2021 Council Meeting, which have been distributed to staff to stay informed on the revised policies.

The Municipal Office reopened to the public on June 14, 2021 with restrictions in effect, including:

- No more than two (2) persons are allowed in the Municipal Office at one time, and must maintain a physical distance of 2 metres/6 feet.
- Residents must wear a face covering when entering the Municipal Office.
- Residents must use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting the Municipal Office.

A new shift schedule was created in preparation for reopening plans, which will gradually introduced additional staff members back into their workspaces beginning June 14, 2021 and some staff remain on alternating shifts working one full week remotely and the next full week physically in the office. The alternating shifts are scheduled to begin July 5, 2021, and those staff will continue to work remotely until then. This plan remains dependant on local COVID cases.

The CAO and Staff continue to share information about vaccination eligibility.

The Walkerton Business Improvement Area remains closed to the public until further notice, but is available to member businesses by appointment only.

Brockton Child Care Centre:

The Child Care Centre remains open to the public, and staff continue to monitor children's symptoms while dealing with many changes related to screening measures. Staff ensure protocols comply with direction from the Grey Bruce Health Unit and Ministry of Education, and monitor any COVID-19 cases that may affect the Centre's operations for before and after school programs. The Centre continues to operate programming for emergency workers as per the County of Bruce and Provincial Government guidelines, and are preparing for summer school-age programming.

Regular meetings are held with Health Unit staff and child care operators for ongoing measures.

The Grey Bruce Health Unit conducted a favourable inspection of the Child Care Centre in May to ensure operations are running correctly. The Health Unit reviewed the operations, classrooms, and outdoor areas and were impressed with the set up, and process for screening and record-keeping.

Building and By-Law Enforcement:

The Building Department continues to process building permits, and are back to normal operations. Staff continue to support developer's plans and a core staff group are meeting weekly by Zoom to advance the numerous multi-residential development projects on the go in Brockton.

Residents are able to visit the Municipal Office to inquire or obtain building permits, or can continue to drop-off or email documentation to limit visits into the Office.

The Building Department continues to respond to all By-Law Enforcement calls.

Clerk's:

The Clerk's department continues to process and distribute all communication from the Municipality, and minute all MCEG meetings. All COVID-19 pandemic Reports to Council have been and will continue to be distributed on Municipality's [COVID-19 Updates webpage](#) to keep the public informed.

As mentioned previously, communications continue on social media to remind residents through the use of visual graphics to follow COVID-19 protocol, and new projects were launched on Build Your Brockton to encourage a more positive approach to the pandemic. Staff published an [Information Bulletin](#) on May 9, 2021 and another [Information Bulletin](#) on June 9, 2021. Staff continue to adjust communications as needed based on Provincial announcements, and direction from the Health Unit, and continue to monitor legislation for any additional changes to Orders.

Staff continue to administer various Department Head meetings, Council, and Committee/Local Board Meetings through Zoom. Committee and/or Local Board Meetings will also continue electronically through Zoom until further notice. Alternate arrangements are also considered if the majority of members have difficulty assessing the technology. In that case, the Clerk's Department arranges an in-person meeting in a location that allows for physical distancing. All Committee/Local Board Meetings are posted to the Municipal website's Community Calendar to allow public viewing and ensure accountability and transparency.

Staff are bringing forward a separate report to finalize the process for broadcasting Council Meetings on the June 22, 2021 Council Agenda.

Marriage, lottery licensing, and Commissioner of Oath services continue to be offered by appointment. The Clerk's Department ensures that couples and officiants follow Provincial guidelines for wedding ceremonies.

Economic Development:

Staff continue to support and advocate for Brockton businesses and support their inquiries on a regular basis, including working with the Walkerton BIA to collaborate on local initiatives. Staff continue to publish Business Newsletters, and support the business community, as well as promoting grant/loan opportunities. Staff also continue to encourage residents to support local businesses through their reopening in Step One, and continue ordering online, through curbside pickup, or by phone.

The Community Development Coordinator has also been meeting with the County of Bruce to participate in an app to communicate about Visitor Centres, road closures, boat launches, status and pandemic updates, which the Parks and Recreation Department will also have access to. The Community Development Coordinator is also working with the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation to measure the impact of COVID on the business community and housing developments.

The Community Development Coordinator is collaborating with the BIA on a reopening event to support the downtown businesses and encourage shopping local. The event is tentatively scheduled for July 16, 2021 and further details will be announced.

The Community Development Coordinator is also working with businesses to update the www.visitwalkerton.com website and further promotion will occur to outline the extended listing of all businesses in one central place.

Contact information is posted regularly on the Community Development Coordinator's ability to assist residents by phone, email or appointment. Programs to assist the business community further are under consideration and will be reviewed as part of the Community Improvement Plan process.

Work on the Economic Strategic Action Plan and Community Improvement Plan is ongoing.

Finance:

Staff continue to review all departments capital projects, budgetary impacts, track financial implications, and monitor capital projects that may need to be revised as a result of COVID-19.

MPAC have begun assessments for new construction and staff continue to assist them. Supplemental tax bills were also distributed to residents in May 2021.

While the office has reopened, residents can continue to drop off payments, or pay bills through Pre-Authorized Payment Withdrawals, or Online/Telephone Banking.

Staff also assist with IT matters to ensure efficiently while the majority of staff continue to work remotely.

Fire:

The Fire Hall remains closed to outside groups/renters and only available for municipal staff, or firefighter use. Firefighters continue to split in-person training in half to limit the number of individuals present at one time.

The Director of Fire and Emergency Services and Fire Prevention Officer/Health and Safety Coordinator completed research on new PPE requirements through the Ministry of Labour that staff must wear safety glasses and ASTM Level 2 face coverings if working within 2 metres of each other. Communications were distributed to staff on this requirement, and staff ordered supplies for departments, as well as both Elmwood and Walkerton firefighters.

The Director of Fire and Emergency Services continues to communicate with the Grey Bruce Health Unit and Emergency Management representatives regarding vaccination distribution.

Human Resources:

The Human Resources Department distributes communications and webinars on employee wellness, mental health tools, and staff supports. COVID Policies are updated as required and attending to staffing matters related to the COVID pandemic and vaccine eligibility are ongoing.

The Human Resources Generalist continues to assist with recruitment, and ensures that summer staff are advised on COVID-19 restrictions.

Operations:

The Brant and Hanover/Walkerton Landfills remain open. The Greenock Landfill will reopen to the public on July 10, 2021. During the remainder of the Greenock Landfill temporary closure, residents can continue to attend the Brant Landfill. All residents are encouraged to continue to use curbside pickup services. Physical distancing, face coverings, and the vehicle limit of 10 vehicles at a time remain in effect at the Brant Landfill. All residents are encouraged to take advantage of curbside collection.

Household garbage and recycling pickup continues as scheduled unless otherwise advised. The Walkerton Recycling Depot (MTO Yard) remains closed to the public, however, cardboard recycling and styrofoam drop-off are still available.

Staff continue to encourage residents to call the Municipal Office with any cemetery inquiries.

Parks and Recreation:

The Recreation Office at the Walkerton Community Centre remains closed to the public until further notice. However, appointments can be booked for entry to the Recreation Office if required by contacting staff by email or calling 519-881-0625. Residents can also continue to contact staff via email or phone 519-881-0625 during the office closure. There also is the exception to drop-off well water samples between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 1:40 p.m. Monday to Friday.

The Step One Reopening allowed Lobies Park Campground, Walkerton Centennial Pool, and Daycamps to reopen/operate.

Lobies Park Campground remained closed until the Step One Reopening began, so any bookings were rescheduled or refunded since the park would normally open on the May long weekend. Fortunately, Lobies Park Campground reopened at half capacity June 11, 2021 and reservations are required in advance. Campers must maintain a physical distance of 2metres/6 feet from other residents accessing the park but bookings are very high.

Pool operations began to clean and service the amenity. Contractors were arranged to replace the roof and heater/boiler replacement. The Walkerton Centennial Pool will open on June 26, 2021. Swimming lesson registration is available online or residents can contact staff by email or phone to register.

A draft plan has been prepared for day camp operations which would usually begin late June/early July, although the program is dependent upon Provincial restrictions. The plan has been adjusted based on Provincial announcements regarding camp operations in Step One. Summer Day Camps will open in July 5, 2021. Registration is available online or residents can contact staff by email or phone to register and there has been great uptake.

All facility rentals, recreational and leisure programs, including private bookings have been postponed until further notice. The Elmwood Community Centre, Cargill and District Community Centre and Bradley School House Community Centre are closed to the public until further notice.

Staff conducted active inspections of the parks, and prepped equipment and facilities for ongoing work, and summer operations, including grass maintenance, and distributing planters and hanging baskets in Walkerton, Elmwood, and Cargill. Summer staff have begun working, and have been educated on COVID-19 restrictions.

Staff also communicated the opening of additional recreational amenities such as Sports Fields – including Baseball Diamonds and Soccer Fields, Tennis Courts, and the Walkerton Kinsmen Club Splash Pad. Residents were reminded to follow current COVID restrictions for park amenities, including maintaining a 2m/6ft distance from others, that group sizes cannot exceed 5 persons until the Stage 1 Provincial Reopening Framework begins, and that cohort groups must be within your own family.

All other Parks, Trails, Open Spaces and Amenities remain open now. Now that Step One of the Reopening Roadmap has begun, a maximum of 10 persons are allowed outdoors while maintaining physical distancing.

Staff also conducted inventory of all picnic tables, and brought forward a report on the process of loaning out picnic tables to assist local businesses in their reopening process to the June 8, 2021 Council Meeting.

Staff have begun planning for Canada Day celebrations, mindful of the COVID-19 restrictions, as was the case in 2020 when virtual celebrations were held.

The month of June is Parks and Recreation Month, so staff have advertised a [calendar of activities](#) that residents can complete either from home, or locally within the community to be mindful of COVID restrictions. Staff also launched a [Be Active Brockton project](#) promoting monthly at-home programs residents can participate in over the next few months.

Internal Communications:

Regular internal communications remain a priority to ensure all staff are aware of changes as they occur. The health and safety of staff is a priority for the Municipality. Staff continue to be reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance throughout the stressors of the pandemic, and have been encouraged to utilize resources available on the Employee Family Assistance Program, and schedule holidays to ensure employee well-being. Time off has been a challenge for much of the Senior Management Team due to the volume of development activity, significant projects and changing COVID protocols.

The Chief Administrative Officer continues to work with staff to ensure updates on the Municipal response to the pandemic, answering inquiries, relay information personally, and thank staff for their continued work in serving the community during this difficult time.

The CAO and Clerk continue to provide updates to all staff through Zoom following Council Meetings to keep everyone informed on decisions passed. Staff continue to hold Health and Safety tailgate meetings through Zoom meetings.

A new shift schedule was been created in preparation for reopening plans, which gradually introduced additional staff members back into their workspaces beginning June 14, 2021 and some staff remain on alternating shifts working one full week remotely and the next full week physically in the office. The alternating shifts are scheduled to begin July 5, 2021, and those staff will continue to work remotely until then. Our focus remains on ensuring employee wellness and safety, especially as we navigate the next stage of the pandemic and area mindful of the importance of vaccination to ensure business continuity and a healthy workforce.

Staff are requesting Council's ratification of the operational decisions that have been established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity? | Yes |

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

Staff continue to review the financial implications regarding the continued impact COVID-19 has had on the Municipality. COVID-19 financial impact reports will continue. The past reports are all uploaded to the Municipality's [COVID-19 Updates webpage](#).

Reviewed By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trish Serratore', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Johnson', with a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk

Reviewed By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonya Watson', with a cursive, flowing style.

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer