

Report to Council

Report Title:	COVID-19 Municipal Response		
Prepared By:	Fiona Hamilton, Clerk		
Department:	Clerk's		
Date:	March 19, 2020		
Report Number:	CLK2020-09	File Number:	C11CL
Attachments:	COVID-19 Information Bulletin – March 13, 2020 COVID-19 Information Bulletin – March 16, 2020		

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number CLK2020-09 – COVID-19 Municipal Response, prepared by Fiona Hamilton, Clerk for information purposes and further confirms and ratifies all operational decisions, procedures, and cancellations put in place by staff in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report:

Background:

The Municipality of Brockton is committed to the health and wellness of all residents and has adopted a proactive and cautious approach to responding to the COVID-19 infection.

Analysis:

Senior management collectively met on March 13, 2020 to address the updated situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff noted the changes that had progressed, and began developing a plan to properly respond to the pandemic. An Information Bulletin was distributed to the public on March 13, 2020 providing the Municipality's response to the pandemic.

Staff activated Level 1 of Brockton's Emergency Response Plan and began meeting as the Emergency Control Group. The Emergency Control Group met formally on March 16, 2020 and March 17, 2020 to address each department's responsibilities, requirements, and proactive measures that have been taken in response to COVID-19. A second Information Bulletin was distributed on March 16, 2020 providing an update on cancellations. Both Information Bulletins have been attached to this report for Council's information.

The Emergency Control Group is scheduled to meet again on March 19, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. prior to the Special Council Meeting.

Departmental Responses:

Administration:

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) has been in constant communication with Bruce County CAO's, the Grey Bruce Health Unit, and County of Bruce during the pandemic. Staff have been required to make immediate decisions as a result of COVID-19 precautions. Similar to other municipalities across Ontario and as a result of the pandemic situation, staff have prepared a by-law to delegate authority to the Chief Administrative Officer while the pandemic continues. The March 24 Brockton Council Meeting has been cancelled. Our next scheduled meeting is April 14, 2020 and there is a high probability that meeting in person may not be appropriate, or a quorum may not be achievable.

The Community Development Coordinator is connecting with local businesses, and the Walkerton BIA to provide reassurance and assistance during this time. A COVID-19 Business Newsletter was also created and distributed to the economic development community. As previously mentioned, the Community Development Coordinator is creating a Business Continuity Plan, and will also be collaborating with Recreation staff to develop a Vulnerable Populations Plan.

Municipal Office Shift Work:

The CAO has implemented a rotating shift schedule to limit employee interactions and ensure as many healthy employees on one shift as possible to continue municipal and emergency operations. Staff will be working in the municipal office one day, and work from home the following day. Some employees were provided with laptops and remote access to be able to work from home; all employees were given remote access to their email account and take home work to complete. All staff are in constant communication with their Supervisor by phone. Staff have been encouraged to self-isolate from employees who are not on their shift.

Brockton Child Care Centre:

The Minister of Education ordered that all publicly funded schools close from March 14, 2020 returning April 6, 2020. The Ministerial Order resulted in the Brockton Child Care Centre being closed for all child care during this time period due to its location at St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School in Walkerton.

Building:

The Building Department has implemented an electronic system of processing building permits, via email and PDF documentation. A large tote bin has been placed in the municipal office lobby for any large maps, or documentation relating to the building permit process; however, individuals are encouraged to email a PDF copy of their documentation to the department. Building permits can now be paid by invoice online through the individual's banking institution or a cheque can be dropped off.

Inspections will still continue, but minimal contact has been implemented. One contractor will be allowed to be on site with the Building Inspector, but must remain within the two (2) metre proximity. The Building Inspector must call the municipal office to inform staff of their whereabouts for health and safety compliance.

Clerk's

Lottery licensing and commissioning services are currently suspended. Marriage licensing will be postponed and reviewed by staff on a case-by-case basis.

The Animal Control/By-Law Enforcement Officer has been working remotely, and as previously noted, Clerk department staff are working on separate shifts.

Staff have also suspended all Committee and Board meetings until April 5, 2020, and communicated this messaging to all Committees. Staff will continue to work on initiatives already in progress.

All communications have been distributed through the Clerk's Department, according to the Brockton Emergency Response Plan, since the Clerk is the Emergency Information Officer.

Finance:

The tax and utility payment due date of March 31, 2020 still remains; however, individuals are encouraged to pay online through their banking institution. Residents can securely drop-off cheque payments to the municipal office locked drop-box which is regularly monitored by staff.

All departments have been asked to track the financial implications as a result of COVID-19.

Human Resources:

The Human Resources Department has assisted with the development of a number of policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide staff with direction on how the Municipality will move forward in response to the pandemic. A by-law has been drafted to adopt these policies.

Staff are also conducting skype interviews to ensure outstanding positions are filled.

Operations:

As of March 17, 2020 the Greenock Landfill Site is closed to the public until further notice. The Brant Landfill Site is currently still open and will accept transfers from the Greenock Landfill. Increased protocols have been established to protect staff and the public. Residents have been asked to remain patient when using the landfill. Regular hours will continue at Brant and Walkerton/Hanover Landfills unless otherwise advised. Staff continue to communicate with all landfill site employees, as well as the Town of Hanover.

Household waste and recycling pickup will also continue as normal. Bruce Area and Solid Waste Recycling have also created a [Facebook page](#) to keep residents informed on the status of their recycling pickup.

Residents can purchase bag tags from the Municipality's Bag Tag retailers, including Walkerton Foodland, Walkerton Valu-Mart, Cargill Country Variety, Junction 4 & 19, Paisley Freshmart, Towne Convenience, Circle K, and the Brant Landfill Site.

The Walkerton Recycling Report (MTO Yard) is closed to the public, however, cardboard recycling and styrofoam drop-off are still available. The Walkerton Recycling Depot is closed on Saturday, March 21, 2020.

Detailed contingency plans are in place for municipal water and wastewater. There is no impact to our facilities and services. Staff have been in constant contact with Veolia Water to ensure there are no disruptions to our facilities.

Parks and Recreation:

As of March 16, 2020, the Parks and Recreation Office and Brockton Recreational Facilities/Community Centres are closed to the public until April 5, 2020. All recreational and leisure programs have also been postponed until further notice. All March Break Day Camps and public skating are cancelled. The Recreation department will postpone or cancel bookings with refunds based on the preferences of the event organizers. Staff have begun contacting event organizers, and are still deciding on the status of the ice surface. It is predicted that the ice will likely be taken out earlier than expected. Signs have been erected for closure of Municipal Playgrounds to avoid the transfer of the virus, and communications will be released on March 19, 2020.

As previously mentioned, recreation staff will collaborate with the Community Development coordinator to develop a Vulnerable Populations Plan.

Skype interviews will be conducted to ensure that seasonal recreational positions are filled.

All events booked through the Municipality of Brockton for the Walkerton Branch of the Bruce County Public Library have also been cancelled from March 14, 2020 until April 5, 2020. The County of Bruce has also cancelled programs held at all Bruce County Public Library branches from March 14, 2020 to April 5, 2020. The Walkerton and Cargill Library Branches have also been closed until further notice.

Communication to date:

The Municipality has been diligent in its response to residents regarding the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 13, 2020, staff created a webpage www.Brockton.ca/COVID19 providing regular updates on municipal cancellations, information from the Grey Bruce Health Unit (including the new assessment centres) and government contact information. An alert banner has also been posted on the homepage of the municipal website to ensure residents can assess updated information on the COVID-19 webpage.

Staff have been active on social media, providing daily updates regarding cancellations, or information to ensure the public are informed. All communication has been branded with a green alert banner to ensure conformity regarding any COVID-19 update from the Municipality.

Staff have issued two (2) Information Bulletins to the public, providing detailed information on the Municipality's response to COVID-19, as well as symptoms of the virus, and additional resources such as the Provincial Government's, and Grey Bruce Health Unit's websites.

The Municipal Office displays signage notifying the public that the office has been closed until April 5, 2020, but that the drop-off box and front foyer can be accessed in order to drop off any documentation. Staff have also set up a walkie-talkie to allow the public to communicate with staff during the closure, should there be an immediate need. Staff are regularly checking the drop-off box, and foyer to ensure the information is

processed. Precautionary measures, and additional cleaning protocols have been in place at the office to ensure the safety of employees and the public.

Mayor Chris Peabody provided residents with a [video update](#) on the Municipality's response to COVID-19 on March 16, 2020. There has been a positive reaction to the video so far, totalling 117 views on the Municipality's YouTube channel, reaching 7,366 people on Facebook, and generating 32 shares on Facebook. Staff are hoping to continue providing a video update from Mayor Peabody each week.

Staff issued a [Brockton Business and COVID-19 Newsletter](#) on March 17, 2020 directed to local businesses and the economic development sector to inform them on best actions to take to protect their employees and customers. The newsletter also featured information from the provincial government, resources for employers, measures to protect Ontario residents, and the closure of the Municipal Office and Walkerton BIA.

Staff created a poster for the East Ridge Business Park LED sign to remind the public of the importance of social distancing.

In addition, staff will be creating a Business Continuity Plan to assist our local businesses in managing the challenges associated with COVID-19. Staff will also be developing a Vulnerable Populations Plan to ensure that our vulnerable residents are cared for during this time of need.

It is our hope that through the continued communication, the Municipality can assist in "flattening the curve" and ensure the safety and security of our community.

Communications internally are a priority to ensure staff are in the know and aware of changes as they occur. Municipal wide updates on actions to date, FAQ's related to COVID-19, employee programs and promotion of the Employee and Family Assistance Program, as well as departmental updates have been provided to all staff.

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 are currently reviewing the financial implications regarding the continued impact COVID-19 has had on the Municipality. It is expected that there will be a significant impact on the 2020, and possibly future budgets.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Fiona Hamilton, Clerk

Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer