

Report to Council

Report Title: COVID-19 Municipal Response – June 9, 2020 Update

Prepared By: Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk and Fiona Hamilton, Clerk

Department: Clerk's

Date: June 9, 2020

Report Number: CLK2020-20

File Number: C11CL, P03

Attachments:

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number CLK2020-20 – COVID-19 Municipal Response – June 9, 2020 Update, prepared by Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk and Fiona Hamilton, 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 to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report:

Background:

Staff brought forward Report Number CLK2020-09 – COVID-19 Municipal Response at the March 29, 2020 Special Council Meeting, Report Number CLK2020-10 – COVID-19 Municipal Response - Update at the April 7, 2020 Special Council Meeting, Report Number CLK2020-13 – COVID-19 Municipal Response – April 28, 2020 Update at the April 28, 2020 Council Meeting and Report Number CLK2020-17 COVID-19 Municipal Response – May 26, 2020 Update at the May 26, 2020 Council Meeting explaining the departmental responses and decisions taken by the Municipality as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On May 27, 2020 the Provincial Government extended the Emergency Order until June 9, 2020. On June 2, 2020, the Provincial Emergency Order was further extended to June 30, 2020.

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 seventeen (17) times, and have another virtual meeting scheduled for June 9, 2020. The Grey Bruce Health Unit and South Bruce O.P.P. now also participate in the MECG meetings to provide updates.

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.

A total of ten (10) Information Bulletins have been distributed, along with one (1) [Order prohibiting garage sales](#) (which was issued on May 8th and [rescinded on May 27, 2020](#)); two (2) Press Releases, a [Tax/Utility Bill FAQ](#), a [Community Information Sheet](#), Special [COVID-19 Brockton Buzz](#) Issue, and several Brockton Business Newsletters.

Mayor Chris Peabody continues to provide regular COVID-19 Video Updates to the public – a total of eleven (11) videos have been filmed to date, which another video scheduled for June 9, 2020. All of the videos are displayed on the [municipal website](#), and social media accounts, including the Municipality's [YouTube Channel](#). Totalled together the engagement of all 11 videos is 1,212 views on YouTube and 18,712 views on Facebook.

Staff have also broadcasted four (4) Council Meetings through Zoom Video Conferencing and livestreamed the meeting to [YouTube](#). The full recordings of the April 7th, April 28th, May 12th, and May 26th Council Meetings are all available on YouTube and have received a combined total of 429 views.

On May 20, 2020 the Municipality and Walkerton BIA hosted a Brockton Business COVID-19 Recovery Virtual Town Hall with MPP Lisa Thompson and Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria. The [full recording of the Town Hall](#) is available on YouTube and received a total of 66 views. Businesses were also asked a series of follow up questions regarding their feedback on the Town Hall.

Staff are currently advertising the virtual Canada Day Celebrations and encouraging Brockton residents to email their photo and video submissions to recreation@brockton.ca by June 17, 2020 for inclusion in our Community Video which is being created by Wightman. A separate Council Report outlined the event in more detail, and further information is available on our website Brockton.ca/CanadaDay.

As mentioned in previous COVID-19 Municipal Response reports, staff organized the “Connecting Community Challenge” on Facebook and [Build Your Brockton](#), partnered with the [Grey Bruce Huron Strong App](#), and submitted a “Brockton Businesses Rise to Challenge of COVID-19” column to the Hanover Post.

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 O.P.P., and the County of Bruce on a weekly or more frequent basis. Ms. Watson continues to review Business Continuity Plans with Department Heads and ensure staffing levels and back up response.

Enforcement matters continue to be dealt with by the Municipality's By-Law Enforcement Officer and Fire Prevention Officer.

Ms. Watson continues to meet regularly with Department Heads and staff will continue to establish opportunities to connect and increase staff morale during this time of uncertainty while ensuring key projects move forward.

The Recovery Sub-Committee continues to meet weekly to prepare and plan for the Municipality's reopening. The Municipal office remains closed to the public. All essential services continue to be offered with the rotating staff shifts leaving all services attended to in a safe manner. As of June 8, 2020 staff members who have been mostly working remotely will return to the Municipal Office for their scheduled rotating shift. The ability to social distance and safety protocols will be further assessed as more staff enter the office space.

Brockton Child Care Centre:

The Brockton Child Care Centre remains closed until further notice. Staff continue to converse with the Ministry of Education, County of Bruce, Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board, and Grey Bruce Health Unit to establish a recovery plan when the Centre reopens. This is a robust plan that will require added staff resources and cleaning measures to accommodate the safety measures that will be required.

Construction for the Child Care Centre Expansion has begun, and staff have started to clear out rooms in the building to accommodate for the renovation. Staff are working on the additional policies required related to re-opening.

Building:

The Building Department continues to process building permits and conduct inspections following established protocols. Property owners who are issued building permits are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that all construction work must be done in compliance with Provincial Orders, COVID-19 protocols and guidelines.

Clerk's:

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

As previously noted, the Clerk's Department continues to broadcast the electronic Council Meetings, and are developing a plan for future broadcasting of Council Meetings after the pandemic has concluded. Clerk's staff continue to administer various meetings for Department Heads through Zoom.

As of June 3, 2020 the Municipality lifted the full cancellation restrictions of all Committee and Local Board Meetings, and directed Committees or Local Boards to meet electronically through Zoom only as necessary with the understanding that these meetings would be held to discuss items that are part of Brockton's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Committees must contact the Clerk to organize an open Zoom webinar to allow public viewing and ensure accountability and transparency. These Committee Zoom webinars are added to the website's Community Calendar.

Lottery licensing and commissioning services continue to be postponed at this time. However, the Clerk Department have been busy responding to marriage license inquiries. Since some municipalities were not providing the service at all, Brockton had received an influx of inquiries for appointments. A total of 25

marriage licenses have been issued to date (21 of those licenses were issued from March 13 to June 5, 2020 during COVID-19). As a comparison, in 2019, a total of 24 licenses were issued from January to May (18 of those licenses were issued from March 13 to June 5, 2019).

The By-Law Enforcement Officer continues to respond to enforcement calls. The Clerk Department has been transitioning and training the new contract By-Law Enforcement Officer to assume her role shortly as the current By-Law Enforcement Officer proceeds to take maternity leave.

Staff are also assisting the Parks and Recreation Department in promoting the virtual Canada Day celebrations.

Economic Development:

Dr. Arra, Grey Bruce Medical Officer of Health hosted a Business Information Webinar on June 5, 2020 providing information for businesses on how to reopen safely during the pandemic. The Community Development Coordinator promoted and participated in the webinar.

As previously mentioned the Community Development Coordinator arranged and participated in the Brockton Business Town Hall and contacted attendees with a follow-up survey which was distributed to Provincial Ministries.

Staff continue to release [Brockton Business Newsletters](#) focused on the COVID-19 pandemic to ease the burden on businesses, and provide support. The Community Development Coordinator is corresponding with various business owners on a regular basis regarding Provincial, County and local funding opportunities and assisting as required. New ways to support local business are being discussed and a draft plan is being prepared.

The CAO continues to participate on the Bruce County Economic Task Force working with the Community Development Coordinator to ensure ideas supporting Brockton Businesses are relayed. New programs are being released by the County and readily communicated by Municipal staff. Staff are also investigating ideas and working with the Walkerton BIA to collaborate on local initiatives.

Finance:

Staff continue to review all department's capital projects, identify budgetary impacts, track financial implications and determine if projects should be postponed until 2021 both as a result of COVID-19. Staff are also discussing recovery planning with the sub-committee.

Fire:

The Fire Chief and Fire Prevention Officer/Health and Safety Coordinator have been busy as leads on the Recovery Sub-Committee.

As mentioned in previous reports, the fire ban was lifted on May 14, 2020. A number of agricultural permits have been issued since the ban was lifted.

Firefighters continue to have virtual meetings and conference calls through Zoom, and an online training platform is being developed and should be launched shortly.

Firefighters also continue to complete electronic assessments, truck checks, and weekly reports on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Human Resources:

Staff continue to review and revise pandemic policies to ensure their consistency with the ever-changing pandemic. Staff also continue to assist employees in various matters related to COVID-19, and maintain regular communications in a timely manner with a focus on employee wellness.

Staff orientated the newly hired Parks and Recreation summer students. Staff in administration have been re-deployed to assist with seasonal demands in facility and parks maintenance. The Brockton Child Care staff remain on temporary lay-off until re-opening plans can be implemented.

Operations:

A number of waste management updates were provided in the [June issue of the Brockton Buzz Newsletter](#) to inform the public on COVID-19 updates regarding the Walkerton Recycling Depot, landfills, bag tags, and clothing donations.

Operations at the Brant Landfill, Walkerton Cemetery, and Water/Wastewater Services continue as normal.

Public Works staff continue to work on projects, vehicle maintenance, and implement capital projects.

Parks and Recreation:

On May 26, 2020 Council approved proceeding with a virtual Canada Day Celebration in Brockton. Staff have been busy preparing for the event, and promoting residents submitting content for the community video which is due June 17, 2020.

Four (4) summer students were hired to assist in parks and grounds maintenance.

Staff have discussed the future of the day camp program which would normally be offered in the summer months. With Municipal Recreation facilities still closed and the risk implications related to staff and children safety a thorough review of health and safety measures was required. The Grey Bruce Health Unit provided a guideline document regarding the reopening of day camps. A separate report will be presented to Council on this topic.

On May 21, 2020 certain Brockton recreational amenities were reopened for walkthrough access provided that with physical distancing restrictions are met. Trails and greenspaces continue to remain open with the same restrictions. Signage was updated to reflect this change, and communication was distributed to the public. As a result of these openings and the fact that public washrooms are currently closed to the public, staff deployed six (6) portable toilets (two (2) each) at the Walkerton Community Centre parking lot, Lobies Park boat launch, and possibly on the Saugeen River Trail near the Walkerton Fire Hall. These portable facilities are cleaned twice daily by staff.

The Parks and Recreation Office, community centres, recreational facilities and park amenities such as playgrounds, and splash pads remain closed to the public until further notice. The Walkerton Centennial Pool

is unfortunately closed for the season due to the pandemic. As mentioned previously, the Brockton Community Garden was reopened.

Staff continue to inspect municipal parks, properties, and facilities on a regular basis. Residents with concerns of damage, vandalism, or mischief occurring in Brockton’s recreational facilities or amenities were encouraged to notify the Parks and Recreation Department, and notify the O.P.P. if they witnessed damage, vandalism, or mischief while occurring.

Staff resumed the grounds maintenance/grass cutting of municipal properties with physical distancing requirements, and continue to discuss community services, capital projects, and recreational programming while considering a recovery plan.

Bookings and events at all municipal facilities and properties continue to remain cancelled until June 30, 2020. As the situation surrounding the pandemic emergency evolves, the need to re-evaluate cancellations beyond June 30th may be required.

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 have been 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 take holidays as booked to ensure employee well-being.

The CAO has conducted several Zoom meetings with all staff providing updates on the Municipal response to the pandemic, answer inquiries, relay information personally, and thank staff for their continued work in serving the community during this difficult time.

Staff provide an update to all staff through Zoom following Council Meetings to keep everyone informed on decisions passed. Staff also participate in a bi-weekly 15 minute Zoom social meeting to boost morale and connect during the rotating shift separation. Staff have also resumed Health and Safety tailgate meetings through Zoom meetings.

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. The Finance Department has prepared several reports related to the COVID-19 financial impact which have been distributed on the Municipality's [COVID-19 Updates webpage](#).

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk



Fiona Hamilton, Clerk

Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer