

Report to Council

Report Title: COVID-19 Municipal Response – November 10, 2020 Update

Prepared By: Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk

Department: Clerk's

Date: November 10, 2020

Report Number: CLK2020-39

File Number: C11CL, P03

Attachments:

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number CLK2020-39 – COVID-19 Municipal Response – November 10, 2020 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 eight (8) COVID-19 Municipal Response Reports during the months of March, April, May, June, July, August, and September explaining the departmental responses and decisions taken by the Municipality as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health did not renew the Order requiring the mandatory use of face coverings in public places in Grey Bruce that expired October 9, 2020. The Grey Bruce Health Unit recommended that residents follow the Provincial regulations which require mandatory face coverings in all public indoor settings as per *Ontario Regulation 364/20: Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*.

The Municipality continues to coordinate with lower-tier Municipalities and the County of Bruce regarding when to declare the local State of Emergencies to be over. Municipalities continue to monitor the number of COVID-19 cases to decide on the declaration removal.

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 thirty (30) times, and have another virtual meeting scheduled for November 24,

2020. The Grey Bruce Health Unit and South Bruce O.P.P. also participate in the MEEG 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. No new Information Bulletins or Press Releases have been issued since September. Information from the Grey Bruce Health Unit regarding safe Halloween celebration protocols was shared on social media and the website in October. On November 3, 2020, the Municipality also shared the Grey Bruce Health Unit's [Well Water Testing Media Release](#) announcing that the Walkerton Community Centre is a new location for well water sample bottle pick-up and drop off on Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 1:40 p.m.

No new COVID-19 Update videos from Mayor Peabody have been filmed since the summer. Mayor Peabody filmed a Thanksgiving Message in October which received 13 views on YouTube and 627 views on Facebook.

Staff continue to broadcast nineteen (19) Council, Court of Revision, and Committee of Adjustment Meetings through Zoom Video Conferencing and livestreamed the meetings to [YouTube](#). The full recordings of the Council, Court of Revision, and Committee of Adjustment Meetings held in April, May, June, and July, August, September, and October are all available on YouTube and have received a combined total of 1,829 views - Each meeting averages approximately 100 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 O.P.P., and the County of Bruce on regular basis.

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 on remaining re-opening protocols and ensure key projects move forward this year or are planned for in 2021.

Staff continue to work at the Municipal Office and follow health and safety measures in place to protect staff. In accordance with Provincial requirements, all staff and members of the public interacting with staff must complete a mandatory COVID-19 Screening Checklist daily. This Screening Checklist is completed by all Municipal Employees before entering Municipal facilities. Staff continue to wear face coverings if they are required to interact with members of the public. Staff further continue to ensure members of the public are

following Provincial orders by wearing face coverings when entering the facility, and maintaining proper hand sanitizing and physical distancing.

Department Heads have planned ahead for remote working arrangements to be re-instated if required.

Brockton Child Care Centre:

The Brockton Child Care Centre continues to care for children, and monitor children's symptoms in compliance with direction from the Grey Bruce Health Unit and Ministry of Education, especially as cold and flu season has arrived.

The Centre have hired additional staff and are planning for the increased number of children since the expansion has been completed.

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.

Residents continue to submit or apply for building permits via email to the Chief Building Official and Building Inspector. Building permit applications and general inquiries continue to be accepted at the Municipal Office.

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. Council decided to continue broadcasting meetings using Zoom Video Conferencing for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year. Staff have a report on the November 10, 2020 Council Agenda regarding the 2021 Council Meeting Schedule, and proposed plan to continue broadcasting Council Meetings by Zoom until April 2021 in order allow Council to consider the matter at the 2021 Budget Meetings.

Staff continue to administer various Department Head meetings and Committee/Local Board Meetings through Zoom. Committee/Local Boards continue to meet electronically through Zoom and this is the encouraged and preferred method for staff and resident safety. Alternate arrangements will be considered if the majority of members have difficult 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.

In-person meetings continue to not be recommended as the norm due to the additional staff resources needed for adequate cleaning and disinfecting and to minimize contacts for staff and committee members. Active COVID-19 screening protocols would also be required, as well as contact tracing. Due to the risks involved, and additional resources required, electronic meetings will continue to occur.

Marriage licensing, lottery licensing and commissioning services continue to be offered by appointment. The Clerk's Department continue to receive inquiries for marriage licenses and officiant bookings and ensure couples and officiants follow Provincial guidelines. Staff advertised for Civil Marriage Officiant Positions, and are currently reviewing the applications received and will bring a report to Council in the near future regarding the appointment process to fill the Officiant vacancy.

The contract By-Law Enforcement Officer continues to respond to enforcement calls, and has received an increased volume of calls lately.

Economic Development:

Staff continue to support and advocate for Brockton businesses and support their inquiries on a regular basis, and work with the Walkerton BIA to collaborate on local initiatives.

Staff continue to advertise grant and loan opportunities to businesses, including new available programs and support for business tenants.

The Walkerton BIA are hosting a Hometown Christmas Market in Walkerton on November 13 and 14, 2020 and have received approval from the Grey Bruce Health Unit for their event and additional guidelines to follow to ensure safety and security of businesses and attendees. The event has been advertised on the Municipality's Community Calendar on the website, social media accounts, and was included in the November Brockton Buzz Newsletter.

Finance:

Staff have reviewed all departments capital projects, budgetary impacts, track financial implications and determine if projects should be postponed until 2021 as a result of COVID-19.

A Report was brought to Council on October 13, 2020 regarding the impact of COVID-19 and the Safe Restart Program. The Municipality had received funding for Phase 1 of the program, and staff examined the Municipality's financial pressures and eligibility for Phase 2 of the program and determined that the Municipality would not submit for Phase 2 funding and would be able to proceed without the funding. Council decided not to apply for Phase 2 of the Safe Restart Program.

Staff continue to work on the 2021 Municipal Budget, and have proposed 2021 Budget Meeting dates which are included in the 2021 Council Meeting Schedule Report on the November 10, 2020 Council Agenda.

Residents continue to pay bills through the Municipal Office, Pre-Authorized Payment Withdrawals, or Online/Telephone Banking.

Fire:

Firefighters continue to self-assess before entering the Fire Halls or responding to calls. Firefighters work physically distanced and use face coverings when responding to emergencies.

The Fire Prevention Officer continues to research advice on the use of face coverings and how other municipalities are responding to the Order.

Human Resources:

Staff continue to review and revise pandemic policies to ensure their consistency with the 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. The Human Resources Generalist distributed Provincial COVID-19 benefit information to Department Heads (including CERB, sick leave, and care for family members) that part-time employees can make use of and further advised Department Heads on the types of leaves available for employees. The Human Resources Department continues to be very busy with recruitment efforts.

Operations:

Operations at the Landfills, Walkerton Cemetery, and Water/Wastewater Services continue as normal. Additional hiring has also been completed in the Operations Department to cover shortages and seasonal positions.

Staff are preparing for winter burials at Municipally-owned cemeteries if the service is required. A report on winter burials will come forward to Council in the near future.

Staff continue to work on capital projects and road constructions. Road closures and service disruptions continue to be communicated to the public through the municipal website, social media, Brockton Buzz Newsletter, and Council Agendas. Service disruptions such as the Riversdale Bridge Closure have also been advertised. A virtual Public Information Session for the Riversdale Bridge is being held on November 9, 2020 on Zoom and has been advertised to members of the public on the Municipal website, social media, November Brockton Buzz Newsletter, and under Public Notification on the November 10, 2020 Council Agenda. Additional information is available on the Municipality's website: Brockton.ca/RiversdaleBridge

Parks and Recreation:

The Walkerton Community Centre (front entrance) has been added as a new location for well water sample bottle pick-up and drop off from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 1:40 p.m. The Municipality shared the Grey Bruce Health Unit's [Well Water Testing Media Release](#) that was distributed on November 3 2020.

Recruitment continues in the Parks and Recreation Department to hire vacant positions, and scheduling has been altered to increase the ice time for user groups and allow for facility disinfection and staff have continued to adapt in discussions with user groups while upholding safety of staff and residents. Recreation programming has not yet resumed. Staff are planning ahead for potential offerings, including public skating, that could occur under COVID-19 protocols, but programming will not resume until the Programming Coordinator position has been filled and recruitment is underway.

Staff continue to advocate for compliance of Provincial regulations to ensure the safety of public and staff, including consultation and positive communication with user groups and organizations.

Staff continue to consult with volunteers and staff at the Cargill, Elmwood, and Bradley Community Centres to finalize their reopening plans, which were approved by the Grey Bruce Health Unit. At this time, the three Community Centres have not reopened, but Cargill and Elmwood may re-open in late November.

The Elmwood Community Centre Board and Cargill and District Community Fund (CDCF) launched successful take-out dinners that were approved by the Health unit. Elmwood have launched several Wing Nights at the Elmwood Community Centre, and the CDCF hosted a take-out turkey dinner on October 25, 2020 at the Cargill Community Centre.

Lobies Campground closed for the season, and staff have winterized the Municipal parks and facilities, including the portable washrooms. The Durham Street Park will remain open for the Walkerton Hometown Christmas Market on November 13 and 14, 2020 and will close for the season the following week; however, staff will still monitor the park.

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 are still encouraged to notify the Parks and Recreation Department, or the O.P.P. if they witness damage, vandalism, or mischief while occurring.

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.

The CAO and Clerk provide an update to all staff through Zoom following Council Meetings to keep everyone informed on decisions passed. Staff have also resumed Health and Safety tailgate meetings through Zoom meetings. Brockton staff have been attentive, cooperative and adapted well throughout this year but it has affected all staff in some manner.

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. Several COVID-19 financial impact reports have been presented to Council in the past few months, and have all been shared on the Municipality's [COVID-19 Updates webpage](#).

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sarah Johnson, Jr. Deputy Clerk

Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer