



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Legislation Text

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REQUEST FOR DECISION

DATE: May 19, 2020

Report No. ADM-20-013

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer, EOC Director

SUBJECT:

Emergency Operations Centre update

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive Staff Report No. ADM-20-013 for information.

RELEVANT POLICY:

Provincial Health Officer Orders
Provincial Declarations of State of Emergency
Provincial Orders
WorkSafeBC guidelines

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

Strengthen the health, livability and diversity of the community
Encourage a resilient and diverse economic environment
Efficiently and effectively provide local services and infrastructure
Achieve excellence in public service

BACKGROUND:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Provincial declarations of states of emergency, the Township activated a corporate Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in March 2020. The EOC's main purpose is to respond to various provincial orders, policies, recommendations and guidelines in addition to monitoring situational information to support the continuation of essential services.

Through the EOC, information is also provided to the public including public health orders, links to assistance program and updates on municipal operations. The Township continues to deliver essential services and implement measures as directed to contain the spread of COVID-19.

To date some of the actions taken have been full closure of recreation, sports and playground facilities and closure of the municipal hall, fire hall and public works yard to the public except by appointment. Through the development and implementation of work from home policies and

procedures, employees have managed to ensure that most remaining municipal operations are sustained. Enhanced cleaning and sanitization processes were implemented in all facilities to ensure that staff who continued to attend the workplace were kept safe. Public works crews were split into shifts to allow continuation of critical and essential operations and maintenance of infrastructure.

Updated policies and procedures have allowed electronic attendance at committee and council meetings to facilitate governance and decision making processes also continue uninterrupted during the pandemic.

As we enter Phase 2 of the pandemic response, the EOC is monitoring public health orders, sector plans and WorkSafeBC guidelines so that we may establish protocols and procedures for the safety of both employees and public in any reopening of operations.

ISSUES:

1. Rationale for Selected Option

While we are all working hard to anticipate needs and minimize impacts to the organization, we are also awaiting further information and guidelines through sector plans published by the Province in order to determine operational processes and procedures as we move forward with Phase 2. As of now we have no timelines on reopening playgrounds or recreation and sports centres as we await guidelines from the Province.

As we reopen certain areas for public access, we must have written protocols in place to ensure the safety of both employees and the public. As such, beginning Wednesday June 3, 2020 as property tax notices will have been issued the week prior, municipal hall will be open to the public from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm Wednesdays and Fridays until further notice. While there are many remote ways to claim homeowner grants and pay outstanding taxes, the option to attend the municipal hall is still utilized.

Public works currently are working on installation of plexiglass at the public counter and procedures will be in place to control flow of public and also to limit the number of people in the hall at any given time. There will be no access to washrooms or any other areas of the building. Limited and controlled access to the municipal hall front counter is intended strictly for payment of taxes (no cash payments) with all other access remaining by appointment only.

2. Organizational Implications

In March, layoff notice for 186 auxiliary staff in recreation was issued. Public access to municipal hall and fire hall was limited to appointment only and closure of playgrounds, recreation and sports facilities was implemented.

Staff developed and implemented work from home policies and reduced physical attendance in workplaces to approximately 30%. Enhanced cleaning protocols were initiated in all physical work spaces. As we gradually move forward, we are implementing staff return to work through rotations of 2 days per week to achieve 40% attendance and will move to 3 days per week for 60% attendance in the coming weeks.

Parks have remained open and now with increased usage, enhanced cleaning and garbage

pickup has been implemented. All other municipal operations have remained active.

3. Financial Implications

As per previous Council discussion, net loss of approximately \$300,000 due to closure of facilities (loss of revenue) and layoff (reduction in wages) to end of August is accommodated in the current financial plan. Further impacts and projections will be developed but are dependent on our ability to adhere to Provincial Health Officer Orders and guidelines.

4. Sustainability & Environmental Implications

Sustainability is currently focused on reopening of facilities and the impact on increased wages and less than full revenue generation. This will be the subject of further discussion and it will be necessary for Council to make policy decisions and provide direction to staff.

5. Communication & Engagement

Extensive internal and external communications have been occurring throughout the states of emergency. The Township website is regularly updated, social media posts are daily and a dedicated page on our website contains information, news releases, links to provincial and federal programs, frequently asked questions and video messaging from the Mayor to the community. New tactics such as Facebook live are also being used.

Frequent communications are issued to ensure that staff remain informed on municipal operations, health and wellness and access to assistance provided by other levels of government.

Contact with the local media is in 2 streams: one involves shifting event advertising to instead share important Township updates for residents; the other involves using news releases to earn media exposure for virtual Township events and operational updates.

Engagement with the Esquimalt Chamber and outreach to local businesses helps drive content to ensure that posted information is relevant. Collaboration with Victoria Police Community Engagement staff ensures that information regarding bylaw and provincial order enforcement remains consistent and accurate.

ALTERNATIVES:

This report is for information only.