



The Corporation of
The Township of Brock
1 Cameron St. E., P.O. Box 10
Cannington, ON L0E 1E0
705-432-2355

May 13, 2020

The Honourable Bill Morneau
Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6
via email: Bill.Morneau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Honourable Sir:

Re: Resolution Requesting Grant Support for Municipalities

Please be advised that the Council of the Township of Brock, at their meeting held on May 11, 2020, upon consideration of the attached report, the loss of investment revenue with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the anticipated cost sharing from the upper tier municipality which would affect future municipal budgets, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution Number 16-4

MOVED by Walter Schummer and SECONDED by W.E. Ted Smith That staff Report: 2020-CO-12, COVID-19 Financial Impact in the First Six Weeks be received; And further, that Council request that the federal and provincial governments provide operating support for municipalities through municipality-specific grants.

MOTION CARRIED

Should you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours truly,

THE TOWNSHIP OF BROCK

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Becky Jamieson'.

Becky Jamieson
Municipal Clerk

BJ: dh
Encl.

cc. The Honourable Rod Philips, Minister of Finance
via email: Minister.fin@ontario.ca
The Honourable Laurie Scott, MPP, Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton-Brock
via email: laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org
Jamie Schmale, MP, Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton-Brock
Jamie.Schmale.C1C@parl.gc.ca
Durham Region Municipalities



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BROCK

Finance Department

Treasurer to Council

Report: 2020-CO-12

Date: May 11, 2020

Date:	04/05/2020
Refer to:	Council
Meeting Date:	May 11, 2020
Action:	null
Notes:	Report
Copies to:	

SUBJECT

COVID-19 – Financial Impact in the First Six Weeks

RECOMMENDATION

1. That staff report 2020-CO-12, COVID-19 Financial Impacts in the First Six Weeks be received;
2. And further, that Council request the federal and provincial governments provide operating support for municipalities through municipality-specific grants.

ATTACHMENTS

None

REPORT

Background

The following is a recap of 2020 key dates and actions associated with the emergence of the COVID-19 public health emergency in Canada and Ontario:

January 30 - The World Health Organization declares the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health event of international concern.

March 11 - The World Health Organization declares the global outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic.

March 13 - The Province of Ontario announces the closure of all public schools for two weeks after March Break, and the Government of Canada recommends against non-essential travel outside of Canada (including the United States), and self-isolation for 14 days upon return.

March 13 – The Township’s senior management staff including the Executive Director of the Township of Brock Public Library met with Mayor Debbie Bath-Hadden to discuss the Township’s response to the pandemic. The group made the decision to cancel the March Break Day Camp Program; cancel Library programming for three weeks; cancel recreation programming; close all public facilities and arenas for three weeks. Closures were to take effect immediately and stay in place until April 6. Refunds were to be processed for any rentals or programs that would be cancelled due to the closing of these facilities and cancellation of these programs.

March 16 – The Township’s offices were closed to the public with staff practicing social distancing while in the building and Council meeting briefly to pass a motion allowing the CAO and Mayor the authority to make certain decisions during this time without the need of a council meeting.

March 17 - The Government of Ontario announced it was declaring an emergency in the Province under section 7.0.1(1) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and has implemented measures to control the spread of COVID19.

The Province has since issued orders under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMPCA) that impact the Township. These include (1) the closure of all facilities providing indoor recreation programs, including community centres and libraries; (2) the closure of all non-essential businesses (not municipalities); (3) a prohibition of organized events and social gathering of more than five people; (4) closure of all outdoor playgrounds and recreational areas; and (5) granting provincial offences officers including Municipal Law Enforcement Officers the ability to enforce provincial orders.

March 24 – The Regional Municipality of Durham and the Township of Brock both officially declared a state of emergency. The Township’s Emergency Operational Centre was official opened with regular virtual meetings being held to discuss the ongoing emergency and authorize actions need.

The Township has adapted the delivery of services across the Corporation to ensure compliance with the Orders. The adaptations include the following:

- Closure of all community buildings until further notice;
- Closure of playgrounds and outdoor amenities;
- Installation of signage specific to the closures in all locations impacted;
- Partnership with Durham Regional Police Services (DRPS) and By-Law Enforcement Officers to enforce Provincial Orders;
- Re-deploying full time staff to other locations to facilitate social distancing;
- Lay off of casual staff and part time staff not required due to facility closures;
- Adjustment to levels of service in response to COVID-19 related closures;
- Limiting the number of staff in the Administration building to allow for social distancing;
- Allowing administration staff to work from home when possible;
- Implementation of a complete burn ban in the Township;
- Livestreaming Council meeting to ensure public access; and

- Implementing a new website section for communicating information related to COVID-19 and the Township's response to the public.

Engagement with the Community

The Township has made communications and engagement a priority from the outset of this pandemic in response, staff immediately implemented a two-pronged emergency communications strategy utilizing both electronic and traditional tactics. The Township started providing specific COVID-19 Updates via our e-newsletter which were shared on our website and social media platforms (twitter and facebook) as well as advertised through the Brock Voice. In order to ensure we were reaching those residents who do not have access to technology, we have been utilizing our bi-weekly advertisement in the Brock Citizen to provide COVID specific updates to residents and posted posters in prominent places. A dedicated COVID-19 landing page has been created on our website (www.townshipofbrock.ca/COVID-19) and just recently, we launched a dedicated COVID-10 newsfeed which residents can subscribe to.

Several public engagement initiatives and communications have been developed including:

- Notice to Seasonal Residents and tourists;
- Videos from the Mayor on COVID-19 specific topics;
- Brock ... We are in This Together Say At Home handout;
- Regional #DurhamStrong campaign;
- #BeKind Social Media Campaign;
- Regional #StayHome Campaign;
- Fraudster Information; and
- Brock ... A Community That Cares Weekly Communication (first one was shared over 10,000 times).

The Township continues to engage with our counterparts in other levels of government, as well as the Region of Durham and area municipalities and share important information to our residents. Staff will continue to work with our counterparts to ensure all relevant information is disseminated to our community.

Staffing Resources

In response to decisions made by the upper levels of government and public health authorities, the Township implemented certain measures to protect staff while maintaining critical services. These measures include the implementing of systems to encourage social distancing and providing the technology for staff to work from home when possible.

Management met with the Union to develop a plan to keep all full time unionized staff working by redeploying some to assist with arena maintenance while those still in the works depot were assigned vehicles where it was possible for each employee to ride alone rather than in pairs. This plan allows for proper social distancing while allowing staff to continue to address essential tasks.

Management also worked with Information Technology (IT) staff to set up devices that would allow staff working in the Municipal Administration building to work remotely. The building is staffed most days with one person from each department. This person deals with issues that cannot be dealt with remotely and is able to practice proper social distancing due to the limited number of coworkers present. By providing secure VPN access to the internal IT networks and the use of Township spare cell phones staff have been able to effectively continue their regular work remotely.

Measures and actions have also been taken to take every reasonable precaution for the protection of our employees as required by the Occupational Health & Safety Act. These include limiting the access by the public or third parties to Township facilities. The installation of a door bell unit allows for deliveries or critical prearranged appointment to continue in a controlled setting. Additional personal protective equipment and supplies have been ordered for the use of front lines staff. Stations have been set up for staff to allow for self-temperature testing and sanitizing. These practices along with a reporting protocol for illness are intended to ensure the safety of workers.

In an effort to allow for proper social distancing and keep controllable costs to a minimum it was necessary to lay off casual, contract and temporary part time staff in most departments. This included 8 Crossing Guards not required due to school Closures; 5 Casual Labourers working in the arenas that were closed before the end of the normal ice season; 9 Rink workers that were not needed once the arenas were closed; 1 Cleaner who was not required for a closed rental facility; and 6 part time Library employees that were not required with the facilities closed. While some of these employees would have been laid off at the end of the season they were let go ahead of time due to the facility closures.

In addition to the layoffs related to closures there were three employees who left the Township's employ during this period. The vacancies created in these positions are currently not being filled however senior management is constantly monitoring staff levels and may have to fill one or more of these vacancies depending on the length of the state of emergency.

The Township's Senior Management Team continues to closely track the availability of meaningful work to ensure our staffing response is appropriate. This is being done with consideration to the Township's fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers.

Financial Implications

The Township continues to monitor and track the financial impacts and pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic. It must be stated, financial goals are secondary to following direction and advice from public health officials regarding the health and safety of the community and residents.

Due to the cost control measures taken by the Township early in this emergency, immediate financial impacts in the first six weeks appear minimal. The loss in revenues associated with the early closure of the Arenas is offset by the saving realized due to the layoff of casual/part time staff. The cancellation of the March Break Day Camp Program

allowed the Township to avoid the cost of hiring part time staff to run the camp with no impact to the budget. In looking at the overall payroll related accounts, the Township was able to save almost \$150,000 in total costs when compared to the same time in 2019. Part of these savings relates to the COVID-19 layoffs and part to the change in staffing complement compared to 2019. These savings will help offset the added cost incurred by the Township for enforcement of the closures ordered by the Province, additional signage to help keep the public informed of closures, personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies and improvements to the IT infrastructure necessary to facilitate working from home.

Should the closures remain in effect for another six weeks it is anticipated that it will have the following effects:

- Loss of Investment revenue – April was already showing a significant decline with revenue posted being one third that reported in the March. To date the loss over last year is just over \$14,000.
- Loss in Interest and Penalty Revenue – Although the amount shown at the end of April is about \$12,000 lower than last year this is due to improved collection of outstanding taxes. The May 1st penalty of just over \$35,000 was waived by Council in an effort to assist property owners through this emergency. It is anticipated that the June 1st waiver could be close to the same amount.
- Treasury staff reports that an additional \$500 in service fees mostly related to NSF charges have been waived to assist taxpayers. The number of these waived fees is expected to continue to increase as the duration of the emergency is extended.
- A delay in hiring casual staff for summer maintenance (grass cutting and outdoor maintenance) has the potential of saving the Township approximately \$5,000 per week however the work normally performed by these casuals would need to be done by the Township's full time staff. Any delay in hiring has the potential of impacting the completion of projects planned for 2020.

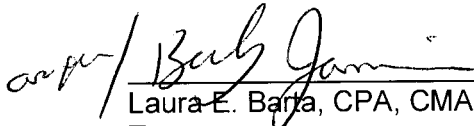
When compared to other municipalities in the Region of Durham, the Township's impact to date is relatively minor. Most other locals are dealing with significant financial costs associated with having year round recreation facilities offering a much higher level of programming being closed to the public. The Region of Durham is also dealing with significant financial costs for the added levels of service required during the pandemic in the areas related to Public Health, Long Term Care, Social Services, Policing, Transit etc. These additional costs will be shared by all the lower tier municipalities in subsequent year's budgets if additional funding from the Province and the Federal government is not made available.

Management for the Township of Brock has taken measures to limit spending when possible and is tracking the costs directly related to the emergency. The Township is also proceeding with many of the capital projects approved in the 2020 budget in an effort to help stimulate the economy. The management group continues to look at ways to further support property owners while providing services essential to the community.

Conclusion

The Township, as are all other municipalities in Canada, is dealing with the financial realities of the COVID-19 virus. Management will continue to act swiftly and decisively in response to the important directives of the government and public health officials.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura E. Barfa, CPA, CMA
Treasurer

Reviewed by,



Robert Lamb Ec.D., CEcD
Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk