

**Subject:** Town of Pelham Business Continuity Update  
#2**Recommendation:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2020-0066-CAO, for information.**

**Background:**

This report is provided so as to update Council on the various changes and evolution to service provision by the Town as the Coronavirus pandemic enters (at least) its sixth week. Council will recall that in October, 2019, it approved an updated Emergency Management Plan. The Town also has a brief default Business Continuity Document. More importantly, Council was provided with specific plans for business operational continuity in a report on Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Pelham was the first Niagara municipality to provide a written document to its council with any meaningful detail on virus-related impacts to operations.

This report is meant to constitute a further update on various Town operations as service capacity, health information and public expectations have evolved with respect to the Coronavirus.

For the sake of time expediency, and so as allow this document to be made public, this report will not review all of the requisite analytical steps that were applied, such as taking leadership, assigning leads, identification of essential services, identification of staffing needs, development of the plan, education and training of staff. As previous reports, press releases and media coverage have all indicated, these activities are occurring on a weekly, and in some cases daily basis. The materials below are grouped by Department, for administrative simplicity. There is no significance to the order in which they are presented.

**Analysis:****Office of the CAO**

The CAO continues to work primarily from home, with periodic weekly attendance for limited time durations at Town Hall. All significant meetings occur by Skype,

Zoom or teleconference. Apart from some documents which require signature, virtually all tasks can be conducted remotely. Improvements in the Town's capacity and utilization of electronic signatures has been identified as an area for future improvement.

## **Essential Services**

Human Resources Services have been in high demand. The Town has now laid off thirty (30) staff, transferred four (4) employees from RCW to Public Works and deferred 34 seasonal and student hires. In addition to conducting layoffs, this business area has been supporting various management initiatives and responding to a higher than normal volume of staff inquiries. The CAO provides daily command, control, communication and leadership functions and is the alternate to the Fire Chief as Commander of the Emergency Operations Centre. The CAO and Fire Chief are avoiding physical interaction so as to maximize the chance that at least one of them will remain healthy throughout this pandemic. One staff member from the Office of the CAO accepted an offer of voluntary layoff.

## **Clerks Department**

The Town Clerk will continue daily participation in EOC meetings, either teleconference or physical attendance.

## **Current Operations:**

**Working From Home:** Staff in this department continue to be highly productive while working from home. Physical attendance at Town Hall has been limited, on an as required basis. The Administrative Assistant is also supporting the Mayor/CAO. She attends Town Hall regularly to prepare documents for signature, etc.

**Communications and Public Relations:** This function has been productive in the work-from-home model with limited attendance at Town Hall. Staff focus continues to be COVID-19 related, but has also taken the lead on producing a large volume of materials pertaining to the gypsy moth. When time has been tight the Administrative Assistant has provided capable back-up in provision of these critical services.

**Council and Committee Meetings:** The Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk will continue to facilitate meetings of Council. Electronic attendance via Zoom continues to work well and protects all stakeholders, including Council, staff and the general public. Until the Province approves of larger group gatherings, this approach must

continue.

**Plans for Future Service Provision:** When reopening occurs, it is anticipated that staff will stagger their returns. When physical meetings resume, everyone entering Town Hall and/or Council chambers should be required to do a full self-assessment to prevent a spike in cases and to protect safety of all. Hand sanitizer will be available and required as anyone enters the Chamber. Prior to meetings, additional cleaning will occur such as all chairs and surfaces being wiped with disinfectant, including tables, arm rests, podium, microphones, etc.

**Committee of Adjustment:** Clerk staff are working toward convening C of A electronically; recent amendments to the *Planning Act* allowed municipalities to push the pause button so the main focus will be to ensure service to applicants and to avoid a huge onslaught once full operations recommence.

**Person-to-Person Counter Interactions:** It is recommended that returning to providing personal service for Commissioner and issuance of burial permits resume on an appointment basis. Prior to anyone arriving at town hall for this purpose, a self-assessment is recommended and Clerks staff will meet only at counter with glass screen/barrier. Staff will use their own pens so as to limit contact and potential contamination.

**Issuance of Marriage Licenses:** Marriage Licence issuance will be by appointment only and will occur at the reception area with physical/glass screening. Self-assessment for all persons will be required. It is mandatory when issuing a licence that at least one party of the marriage attend in person, and the issuer must view identification for each party. Precautionary measures may be needed for this service.

**Small-Scale Weddings:** Again, depending on Provincial guidelines for group size, the Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk could conduct civil marriage ceremonies on a small scale. It would be recommended that the gathering include the officiant, the couple and two witnesses, five people in total. If weather permits, ceremonies can be held in the bandshell in Peace Park, and other “guests” could physically distance on the benches to enhance the experience for the wedding couple.

**Lottery Licensing:** Lottery groups are anxious to move forward with their fundraising initiatives. Staff can begin interactions with these groups again in the same manner as noted above.

**Council Vacancy:** The direction Council determines at today’s meeting will weigh heavily on the Clerks Department. If a by-election is mandated, special provisions

will need to be put in place for working at Town Hall as this will be an “all hands on deck” requirement for this Team. There have been no lay-offs in this Department.

## **Community Planning and Development Department**

As per the overall default Continuity Plan, the Department has identified all services that it provides, ranked them as being “Essential”, “Key” and “Non-Essential”, prioritized and directed resources accordingly. For the past three weeks, two Building Inspection staff who have training and experience as Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (“By-Law”), and were previously appointed by Council as part of the Town’s proactive approach, have been spending significant numbers of hours each week supporting the Town’s bylaw enforcement function. The exact number of hours worked at this task varies, however the Town has committed to have staff either directly working or on call seven days per week, and thus far has been able to meet this commitment. The Province’s direction that municipal staff were to function as first responders for non-compliance of physical isolation directives was not foreseen and has been a significant demand upon Town resources.

### **Essential Services**

- Participate in daily EOC teleconference meeting and SLT meetings (Director)
- Processing development applications that contribute to local economy.
- Receipt of new development applications.
- Preparing recommendation reports to Council on development applications that support the local economy for Council consideration.
- Schedule and conduct building inspection services for structures that have permits issued.
- Process and undertake plans review function for new building permit applications that are being received.

### **Key Services**

- Responding to public inquiries on planning via email and telephone call.
- Hosting By-monthly Pre-Consultation meetings with Town Departments, agencies, applicants and consultants.
- Respond to email and telephone inquiries on building permit related matters.
- Submit monthly reports to Region, MPAC, and CMHC.
- Processes paperwork for payment of Regional and School Board Development Charges
- Open new files for building permits applications and development applications
- Conduct research on policy related matters and work on reports for Council consideration on policy matters.
- Prepare public notices and coordinate with Clerks Staff.
- Circulation of documents to agencies and public.

- Participate in and minute CCC meetings.
- Liaise with legal.
- Investigate and respond to inquiries of building without permit.
- Investigate and coordinate municipal drain maintenance requests.

### **Non Essential Services**

- Maintain files.
- Respond to inquiries that are not time sensitive.
- Working with Clerk's Staff regarding mechanisms and protocols to host public meetings.
- Daily check in calls with Staff and weekly project coordination meetings with Staff.

### **How Staff Operates**

- All staff have the ability to work remotely from home and maintain business continuity.
- All Planning and Building applications are received and processed electronically.
- Meetings are via Zoom or teleconference.
- Pre-screening done at time of booking building inspections and day of inspection.
- Building Inspections are being done maintaining physical distancing and sanitizing afterwards.
- All Planning Staff are working from home.
- The majority of Building Staff are working from home.
- The CBO and Senior Building Inspector come into the office to retrieve physical files needed for inspections and to meet with applicants who are making payments as needed.
- The CBO, Senior Building Inspector and Building Inspector are designated as Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and are available to assist By-law Staff with By-law enforcement matters should this be required.

This Department is working on specific standards for service provision times regarding building inspections, permit review, etc. which will be communicated in a future report. There have been no lay-offs in this Department.

### **Fire and Bylaw**

**Essential Services:** all services provided by these Departments are designated essential. Fire prevention has nothing new to update from the last report. The fire prevention officer is taking on some extra roles to assist other departments, such as signage, delivery of material, cleaning and hall maintenance of fire vehicles and equipment. Bylaw has both officers working 6 days per week and carrying a cell phone for on call purposes 7 days per week until 8pm at night, calls after this time are either sent to the NRP or go to voice mail to be answered the following day. Two staff from the Building Department are serving to augment this staff

compliment. The seasonal hire has been deferred until the best way to deploy the person's services is determined. The Town retains the capacity to bring this person on if the volume increases or staff become ill.

Fire administration is covered by one person who has been working 6 days a week to keep up on additional duties due to emergency management operational cycle. This role can be performed remotely if needed. Other admin duties can be covered by the remaining staff.

The Fire Chief also acts as the CEMC, the regional fire coordinator and is part of the Region's EOC. The alternate CEMC can be take over the EOC duties and there are a few chiefs who can take on the other roles. The Fire Chief can also fill in as Fire prevention officer and a bylaw officer if needed.

Suppression is operating at full strength and is able to respond to all incidents. However, response to medical incidents has been altered to better protect fire fighters. Overall call volumes are down which should result in a savings in the operating budget at year's end.

Fireworks are banned during the virus outbreak. There are currently no fire bans in the Town of Pelham.

As the emergency group develops a recovery plan and begins to implement this plan the work loads of bylaw will increase relative to the plan put in place. There have been ten (10) layoffs in this Department (all crossing guards).

## **Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department**

**Essential Services:** At the MCC refrigeration and HVAC equipment must be monitored and maintained daily, with checks being performed 4-6 times a day. For Pelham Transit – staff schedule on demand daily appointments as required. Keys are left with facility operators. Sanitization of the bus occurs twice per day. RCW staff are supporting Town Hall by providing additional cleaning services at Town Hall twice per day.

**Key Services:** Programmers either work from home or in office on staggered shifts. Culture & Community Enhancement –Implementation of Farmer's Market; Thursday Night experience; New Horizon Grant – Seniors Say it virtual programming, Virtual Canada Day Celebration and Pelham Unites initiative, summer camps; aquatics; Pelham Support Network; Seniors social contact; Virtual seniors programming Seniors Programmer & ActiveNet registrations & facilities rentals – assisting with ongoing Senior Active Living designation program requirements;

registration and facility rentals.

**Duliban Rink** – the ice had never previously been removed since opening – removal of ice, dry surface, check for floor cracks and glycol leaks, clean boards, glass and benches, repair tuflex flooring. Training has occurred for new operators & attendants on glass removal & installation. Cimco scheduled maintenance repair while ice is removed have all been completed. – Finishing painting of walls in pad area and dressing rooms.

**Accipiter Rink** - Installation of new doors on pad (contractor) - Remove stains on concrete in stands and seal concrete floor to prevent future staining. Staff are Sanitizing and cleaning seating as well as preparing for removal of ice prior to new ice technology being installed (which will be the subject of a report on May 4, 2020). Maintenance activities are occurring on the dry surface: checks for floor cracks and glycol leaks; cleaning boards, glass and benches; repairing the flooring near the benches - Cimco maintenance repair while ice is removed (if required).

**Old Pelham Town Hall** - Cleaning/Disinfecting/Organizing – hall, tables, chairs, kitchen, drywall repairs, painting interior walls, cleaning and buffing flooring, gluing down loose tiles.

**Non-Essential Services:** all traditional, planned programming at the MCC has been cancelled indefinitely. In the weeks to come it is anticipated that a clearer picture will develop as to potential to begin re-opening, and which services can and cannot be provided in that context. With the early removal of ice, maintenance work and closing of the MCC, the majority of staff associated with direct service provision have been laid off.

**Pool** - Drain; Pressure wash – Pool, concrete deck, Pool house exterior, sidewalks - Paint pool basin; Paint exterior pool house or remove graffiti; Install – signs, ladders, plumbing; Fill pool with water when necessary; Clean interior pool house, change rooms, public washrooms; Paint Fonthill sign with any extra pool paint; Startup – pumps, boiler, filters, chlorinator - Other tasks being performed: (facility attendants– staggered shifts) - Gymnasium – thorough cleaning and sanitization nearing completion - Drywall patching, repair and painting throughout the building 75% complete - Window cleaning indoor and outdoor 75% complete - Equipment Room; RCW Storage; & receiving room – reorganization and cleaning.

The majority of the Town's layoffs have occurred in this Department. To date layoffs have been a combination of voluntary and involuntary. Four staff with the appropriate skill sets and aptitudes have accepted temporary transfers to the Public Works Department to cover absences amongst full time staff and to perform work

in lieu of the seasonal workforce. Layoffs at present include 8 customer service staff, 4 rink attendants, 3 facilities support staff, 2 facilities attendants, 1 rental associate, for a total of eighteen staff members.

## **Public Works**

**Essential Services:** The vast majority of tasks performed by Public Works are deemed essential by the Province. Specific categorization can be found in the two attachments to this report. The Operations Department has continued to provide the basic municipal services related to the Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection System, the road network, cemetery operations and the trail system while effectively protecting municipal staff. This has been achieved by the following:

- the leasing of additional vehicles. Two additional vehicles plus an off road side-by-side have been retained. Staff are currently sourcing 2 more vehicles for a total compliment of four vehicles plus the side-by-side) allowing for the implementation of a one person per vehicle policy;
- splitting staff into two alternating 10 hour shifts working 6 days a week (Monday through Saturday);
- supplying additional disinfection supplies to facilities and vehicles; and
- increasing the level and frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of staff areas and vehicles (including contracted cleaning services at the Tice Road Operations Facility on Sundays prior to the start of the new work week).

The Roads Department will continue to undertake activities related to meeting the minimum maintenance standards (MMS) as legislated by the Province. These activities will include, but are not limited to the following:

- performing daily road patrols;
- completing the maintenance of roads including patching of potholes;
- performing regulatory sign repair;
- complete cleaning and clearing of catch basins and culverts to mitigate the risk of flooding during major storm events;
- undertaking rural site line clearing of brush at critical intersections within the town; and
- completing the removal of animal carcasses from road surfaces.

While the works completed to date have been focused primarily on the maintenance of critical infrastructure relating to the protection of public health and safety, the warmer weather will place additional demands on staff to maintain green spaces, parks and trails. In addition, it is important for Beautification staff to maintain a minimum level of service with respect to grounds maintenance so that staff are able to respond to recovery efforts more easily when 'normality' returns, and people can once again enjoy our outdoor amenities.



Minor maintenance will be undertaken during the "Response Phase" of the pandemic to ensure that green spaces and park facilities are not neglected to the point where recovery would be difficult and costly. For instance, grass cutting will be performed at a reduced frequency and be kept to a maximum height of 6" to reduce the proliferation of weeds and ticks. In general, staff estimate that the frequency of cutting will be reduced from twice per week to once per week with trimming being undertaken once every two weeks in the majority of green spaces and park lands.

Additionally, baseball diamond infields will be groomed to protect the playing surfaces and remove weeds which would be labour intensive, as well as, requiring additional costs to remove if allowed to spread out of control.

Plant materials for the annual flower beds were reserved and purchased well in advance of the pandemic, but their delivery has been placed on hold until Provincial restrictions are relaxed or lifted. The materials will be stored at the supplier's green house until such time that staff are able to complete the work. Further, in order to reduce the work required for future planting and maintenance of the beds, and while keeping a minimum aesthetic standard, the horticultural beds will be periodically mulched and turned over by Staff. In addition, hanging baskets were also ordered and committed to prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The locations of the hanging baskets are generally located within the Fonthill and Fenwick Downtown Business Areas. The installation of the baskets will go forward as planned as the transition to self-watering baskets allows them to be maintained with less effort and can easily be accommodated with the reduction in the summer staff compliment.

Cemeteries will continue to be maintained as well; however, the level of service will be reduced in accordance with the minimum requirements for grass cutting and ground maintenance described above. The level of service with respect to cutting and trimming will be reduced from once per week at each cemetery location to once every 1.5 to 2 weeks depending on the growth experienced. In addition, Staff will continue to undertake funeral services and burials in the cemeteries while respecting the new provincial guidelines of 10 or less attendees at each service.

By continuing to maintain critical infrastructure including green spaces, parks and horticultural features, Public Works is poised to transition into the recovery phase quickly and efficiently in step with the lifting and eventual removal of Provincial restrictions related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Engineering Department is currently managing Levels of Service with some minor amendments to the delivery of the required service. The Planning & Building

requests are being maintained with a slight delay in replying to Site Plan, Subdivision and Development reviews mainly due to the inability to access documents retained within the Municipal Facilities. Staff continue to coordinate scheduled times to attend the office in order to review and retrieve documents required to undertake these reviews. In addition, field inspections for assumptions of subdivisions and developments as well as completing Line of Credit Reductions are being deferred at the moment as this process requires a number of people to walk the development at the same time to complete the inspections prior to final sign-off.

Engineering Staff continue to complete Contract Administration and inspection duties on capital projects that are currently in design and in construction. Staff are able to proceed with the formulation of tenders and RFPs for projects so that the department is ready to begin construction and maintenance activities as soon as Provincial restrictions are reduced or lifted. Engineering Staff are working closely with the Town's Procurement Staff to develop contract specifications and clauses that will allow Tenders and RFPs to be released with the expectation that unless the project is considered essential by Town Staff they will not proceed until such time that the Province determines it is safe to do so.

Currently, the only project currently under construction that has been determined to be essential is the continuation of the Pelham Street North Reconstruction project since this project contains critical underground infrastructure related to water and wastewater systems and was started prior to the notice to suspend non-essential business.

The Climate Change Coordinator is completing tasks in accordance with the FCM's Milestone Reporting requirements.

Attached please see the LOS spreadsheets for Public Works including the various Operations Departments and the Engineering Department.

### **Corporate Services Department:**

Corporate Services has identified a number of functions which can be done, at least in part, from home. Home-based and remote logins have now been tested for most staff. Specifically, the following arrangements have been made:

#### **Essential Services:**

**Payroll:** The Payroll Clerk has a laptop installed with on-line access to the Town's finance system and can run payroll from home. The HR Consultant is the Payroll Clerk's back up and also has on-line access from home. Both the Treasurer and

Deputy Treasurer can approve bank files electronically from home if required.

**Information Technology:** The IT Manager has home access to all computer networks and can monitor the systems from home. The Part-time IT person can back up the IT manager, if required. IT team has been supporting all staff working from home and on-line Council meetings.

**Collection of Taxes and Water Billing Payments:** These payments can be received with on-line banking, paying at the bank, through regular mail and telephone banking. The next due date for taxes is April 30 and all bills have been sent out. A larger drop box for mail and cheque payments has been installed so more people can drop off cheques. Some residents have been inquiring whether the Town will extend the waiving of interest and penalties beyond April 30. They have been directed to establishing pre-authorized payments which will spread their payments over 10 or 12 months. The residents have responded positively to this. The website has been updated to provide this message as soon as one logs into the website.

**Accounts Payable:** All invoices are current. The Payroll Clerk is the back up to the Accounts Payable Clerk. He can process payments in her absence. The Accounts Payable Clerk is set up to do all her A/P processing at home. All invoice authorization is now electronic.

**Procurement:** The Purchasing Clerk can process Purchase Orders from home if required. The Administrative Assistant is being trained as the back-up to Procurement. The Town uses e-Solutions software for Procurement which is 100% on-line for requests and submissions. Procurement is continuing and RFPs are being generated for capital projects stating that the awarding and commencement of these projects will start after the pandemic restrictions are lifted by the Province.

**2019 Financial Statements and Audit:** The Audit has been completed by Deloitte remotely. It required a lot more work by staff by it was completed on time. The Consolidated Audited F/S will be presented to the Audit Committee on May 7 and then approved by Council on May 19. Staff are working on the Financial Information Return (FIR) which is due by May 31, 2020 to the Ministry. We are on target to have this submitted on time.

## **Financial:**

Financial issues are not the focus of this Report. On May 19, 2020 the Treasurer will present a comprehensive analysis to Council which illustrates revenue shortfalls

(primarily in the RCW Department), impact upon taxation and water collections, the value of public works projects foregone, projected savings associated with layoffs, miscellaneous costs such as increased cleaning, vehicle leasing, etc. This report will allow Council to generally assess the financial impact of the Coronavirus pandemic upon Town operations (to date) and provide any further direction that it sees fit to give.

**Alternatives Reviewed:**

N/a

**Strategic Plan Relationship: Strong Organization**

This report addresses management's efforts to protect the health and safety of staff while maintaining service levels and organizational capacity as much as possible.

**Consultation:**

The entire senior leadership team and the Co-ordinator of Human Resources contributed to the drafting of this report.

**Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:**

Operations and Development Engineering Proposed Service Levels (2 documents).

**Prepared and Submitted by:**

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