

Subject: Meridian Community Centre Ice Pad Status
and Future Opportunities**Recommendation:**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2021-0024 for information;

AND THAT Council approve the plan to maintain ice in both arenas for the duration of the province-wide shut down;

AND THAT Council approve in the further alternative the plan to maintain ice in both arenas until June 1, 2021, to provide recreational opportunities to the public, and to reduce the net loss of revenue caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and provincial restrictions.

Background:

The Government of Ontario declared its first provincial state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 on March 17, 2020 which resulted in the closure of Town of Pelham Facilities including the Meridian Community Centre (MCC).

On July 6th, 2020 the Town of Pelham began to slowly reopen its facilities and began to provide recreational services and opportunities in a safe and measured approach. The ice surface became available to user groups and camps on July 8th, 2020 and public skating on October 4th, 2020.

Several surrounding area Municipalities kept their facilities and arenas closed to the public which resulted in an increased demand for ice time. Covid-19 impacts in other sectors including entertainment, travel, education and commerce helped drive people towards the recreation and fitness opportunities offered at the MCC. By having the ability to provide these services, The Town of Pelham was able to capitalize on this demand which allowed both ice pads to be fully utilized throughout the summer and fall.

On December 21, 2020 the Province of Ontario announced a second provincial shutdown to stop the spread Covid-19. This shutdown was to remain in effect for 28 days, however on January 12, 2021 the province issued a stay-at-home order and expanded its public health restrictions.

Analysis:

During the initial shut down announced on December 21, 2020, staff developed a work plan that included maintaining both ice surfaces to accommodate user groups and public demand as soon as the restrictions were lifted.

Since the recent provincial stay-at-home order, several area municipalities have made plans to remove their ice, and close the arenas for the remainder of the season. The closure of arenas and removal of ice in other municipalities will directly result in increased demand for rental opportunities here.

The costs of maintaining the ice as is are minimal. Under normal operation the refrigeration plant runs between 10 and 12 hours per day. To keep the ice in usable condition in anticipation for reopening, the bond between the concrete pad and the ice must be maintained. Staff are currently maintaining the ice operating the plant an average of 4.8 hours per day.

Taking the ice out and reinstating it will involve significant plant energy load that may overshadow any possible energy savings if removed. To remove and reinstate the ice in both arenas will cost approximately \$15,400. The additional hydro costs for running the refrigeration plant for 20 hours per day during initial ice buildup are not included.

The MCC user groups have expressed interest in returning to pre-lockdown schedules as soon as the facility is able to safely reopen for use. Hockey and Figure Skating have expressed interest in extending their seasons and have committed to utilize ice through April and May.

Cancellations of events typically held in the Accipiter arena and notification that the Lacrosse Association will delay the start of their season until June allows the Town of Pelham to offer both ice surfaces until the end of May for potential rentals.

Financial Considerations:

During the period between July 1, 2020 and August 31, 2020 revenues increased in comparison to 2019 by 200% or \$108,804.

The total revenue in 2019 for these two months with one ice pad was \$54,395. In 2020, the total revenue with two ice pads was \$163,199. The increase was a result of operating both ice pads and the demand for rental time by skills camp organizers and private renters.

Keeping the ice for both pads this year has made a significant difference in helping the Town mitigate the financial impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Alternatives Reviewed:

Removing ice from one or both arenas was reviewed. Both of which are acceptable options given that the staff do not know the future end date of the current province wide shut down. However, given the efficiency of the facility, the potential for rental revenues, and the ability to safely provide recreational opportunities, outweighs the costs of maintaining the ice in its current state.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Build Strong Communities and Cultural Assets

During the COVID-19 pandemic many people are desperately looking for ways to remain active and access recreation and fitness programs. Because of the Town's commitment to provide services, the Meridian Community Centre has become a beacon of success and serves as a model for safely and effectively offering recreational opportunities when the community needs them most.

Consultation:

Meridian Community Centre User Group Committee
Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

There are no other pertinent reports or attachments included for this report.

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