

Subject: Inclement Weather Policy

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2021-0209 Inclement Weather Policy;

AND THAT that Council approve the Inclement Weather Policy S100-XX.

Background:

The Town has recently adopted and tested a notification platform called INS (Internal Notification System). This program was developed by the Region and they have extended the use of the program to all local area municipalities. The intent of the program is to have the ability to notify staff, and eventually elected officials, of events which may affect their daily activities such as a Town closure during a snow event. This was previously an "Action Item" in Pelham's strategic plan, but was removed because the Region was developing a system at no expense to the Town.

During the review of the new system's functionality, senior administration became aware that the Town does not have a formal inclement weather policy in place. In previous years, the decision to close Town Hall was communicated to staff work email addresses. This means of communication has left a number of staff who do not have access to their Town email outside of work unaware of facility closures or other emergency events until their arrival at work. The informal system also required the management team to individually notify each of their staff via personal cell numbers in hopes the message reaches them prior to their commute to work.

This policy is needed to assign responsibility for determining closures and cancellations of Town workplaces, to clearly outline the communication protocol around a Town closure decision resulting from inclement weather, and to clarify the responsibilities and expectations of employees in the event that there is an inclement weather event. In conjunction with the INS, this policy will enhance the municipal corporation's performance during major weather events.

Analysis:

The attached policy addresses a number of scenarios: what do to in the event of

inclement weather if facilities remain open, procedures for Town-wide closures, rules around compensation, the expectations of the employees whose services are deemed essential, and the rules for those not scheduled to be in the workplace during a closure. It also clearly outlines the responsibilities of the Chief Administrative Officer or their designate, the management team, and employees.

All of the scenarios addressed in the policy have occurred during previous inclement weather events. Decision making varied across departments as Directors did not have the clear set of procedures needed to provide consistent responses, further demonstrating a need for this policy.

Financial Considerations:

As the Town is already operating in most of the manners described by the policy, there are no financial implications associated with implementation. When the Town needs to close in emergency weather situations the most common costs pertain to lost productivity, rather than financial costs. With the recently developed ability for many staff to work from home, the impact of Town-wide closures on productivity in most departments will be significantly reduced.

Alternatives Reviewed:

The Town could continue operating without a formal policy in place. This however is not recommended as it creates ambiguity in the process, causing confusion amongst staff and a lack of consistency across the organization.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Risk Management

The implementation of both the Internal Notification System and a policy outlining clear procedures will prepare the Town for unexpected closures by removing ambiguity and effectively eliminating confusion on protocol during inclement weather events. The policy places importance on maintaining employee safety while continuing to deliver essential services to the public.

Consultation:

The policies from the City of Hamilton and the Town of Newmarket were referenced as templates when drafting this policy.

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Appendix "A" – Inclement Weather Policy

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