

Mayor's Report – Thursday June 18, 2020

It has been 4 weeks since our last regular Council meeting.

I am pleased that this Council was able to pass the 2020 Budget at a special meeting of Council on June 4th. We heard from the Auditor's Report, many outstanding financial items have been resolved since our 2019 budget. We have a balanced budget that is taking into consideration the possible impact of COVID-19 on our municipality's financial health. The 2020 Taxation and PIL projected revenue are based on 2020 assessment with 2019 tax rates = 0% lower-tier tax increase for HCM.

As COVID-19 related announcements often come through daily federal and provincial televised media briefings, it is a challenge to stay updated. Information of the provincial decisions can be found at newsroom@ontario.ca. Much of Ontario has entered Stage 2 of reopening services. Some of the latest announcements include: lifting of the 30-day supply limit on prescriptions; establishing a social "circle" of no more than 10 people without physical distancing; gradual resumption of family visits to LTC facilities and easing restrictions on wedding & funeral ceremonies.

I attended the County Council virtual meeting on May 27^h. Warden Robinson reported on the work of the Economic Impact of COVID-19 Task Force and its ongoing work of support for individuals and businesses. The Renfrew County Virtual Triage Assessment Centre (RCVTAC) has helped thousands and hopefully is the beginning of a new rural approach to healthcare, that will continue into the future.

At the June 10th virtual meeting of the Health Committee, the VTAC message was repeated citing the lack of family physicians in the COR. Long Term Care homes in the County remain COVID free. There is continuous testing of staff and residents and so far, all reports are negative. All staff will have 2 tests during the month of June. Family visits to the facilities are possible now but are very labour intensive.

The Deep River and District Hospital Mayors' meetings have moved to a biweekly electronic format. CEO Richard Bedard reminded us that COVID-19 testing is being done only by VTAC and not at the hospital. Some people have been putting off going to the hospital and he wants residents to know that they should seek help at the DRDH ER for emergent situations.

I did make contact with OPP Detachment Commander Neufeld on May 22nd and we were able to discuss a number of concerns. OPP water patrols on our lakes and the Ottawa River started on June 1st and go to September. If the municipality thinks that a patrol on water or ATV trail may be warranted, we can make a request but should give lots of lead time. This also applies to any future events that might be held at the hall or baseball diamond.

On the matter of "alerts" in the Ontario, he stated that every situation is different. An Amber Alert is reserved only for children or youth at risk. In a situation such as the incident in Nova Scotia with an active shooter, a "ready alert" would be used here. We must remain vigilant of our own personal safety and beware of hitchhikers on this section of Trans Canada Highway. As Inspector Neufeld stated "anything can happen!"

Mayor Debbi Grills