

Mayor's Report – Wednesday September 22, 2021

Today I am happy to officially welcome back Clerk-Treasurer Crystal Fischer from MAT leave. We are proud of her accomplishments over the last 18 months – not only a new baby but also the completion of her Municipal Administration Diploma with honours! This is a transition time for the municipal office staff that also coincides with new provincial regulations on proof of vaccination status and ever-changing pandemic rules. I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all municipal staff who have continued to maintain a high level of service to our community through trying times.

At the August 4th DRDH Mayor's meeting it was noted that the swabbing trailer had been closed and the emergency department had been very busy. Director Janna Hotson was pleased that we were hosting a walk-in vaccine clinic at our municipal hall on the next day. On September 9th DRDH meeting we were informed that all hospital staff will be mandated to vaccinate going forward.

The COR Health Committee meeting on August 11th began with a report from Emergency Services' Chief Nolan that the COVID-19 costs in that department were being met by the province. The LTC report from Director Blackmore spoke about the easing of restrictions in the Miramichi Lodge and Bonnechere Manor and recruitment staffing plans for the future. In the afternoon, RC Housing Corporation's new manager Jennifer Dombroskie advised Council of the rent increase of 1.2 % for 2022. At the Community Services Committee we learned from the Child Care & Early Years Dept. that a much needed Child Care facility has opened in Douglas.

There was a Special Session of County Council on August 19th to present Amendment #31 of the Official Plan of the County of Renfrew. This plan amended only the Ministry modifications that were made in 2020. The OP was passed unanimously by the County Council with KHR absent. OP Amendment 31 was given approval by the province on September 14th.

In the afternoon of September 9th RCDHU meeting Dr. Cushman emphasized that there were only 4 cases of COVID-19 during the entire month of August in Renfrew County. By contrast - there were 4 cases in the first 8 days in September! Dr. Cushman also noted that travel and family gatherings seem to be a catalyst for transmission at this time. Needless to say, he is a proponent of less travel and small social groups. South Algonquin Township Council led by Mayor Jane Dumas and CAO Bryan Martin have developed a proof of vaccination policy that emphasizes public safety and a safe work environment for employees. There will be more information on these policies to come.

Council's Conflict of Interest Training (Zoom) has been rescheduled to Wednesday September 29th at 6:00 pm. Paul Cassan of Wishart Law feels it was important to have all of Council in attendance to hear the same message. He stated that he is dealing with a number of cases of Conflict of Interest presently. Mr. Cassan stated that these cases can be very costly for both the municipality and personally.

On September 15th, the Health Committee meeting announced that the Peter J. Marshall Innovation Award was presented to the County of Renfrew for the development of the Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre at the 2021 AMO Conference. EMS will be developing vaccination policy for ambulance services (93% of paramedics are now vaccinated). The Paramedic service is affected by both hospital and LTC policies.

Mayor Debbi Grills