



TOWN OF DIDSBURY AGENDA
Special Council Meeting
Monday, April 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
Held by ZOOM Meetings

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
3. UPDATES
 - 3.1 CAO Report (verbal)
 - 3.2 Director of Emergency Management Pg. 1
 - 3.3 Business Continuity Update (verbal)
 - 3.4 Economic Development Officer (verbal)
4. BUSINESS
 - 4.1 Approval of Measures since March 16, 2020 Pg. 4
 - 4.2 Municipal Relief Measures Pg. 5
 - 4.3 Future Council Meetings Pg. 7
5. CLOSED MEETING
 - 5.1 Local Public Body Confidences sec. 23(1)(b) *FOIP Act*
 - 5.2 Advice from Officials sec. 24(1) *FOIP Act*
 - 5.3 Confidential Evaluations sec. 19(1) *FOIP Act*
6. ADJOURNMENT



Town of Didsbury

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

Subject	COVID19 Emergency Management
To:	Mayor & Council
From	Acting Director of Emergency Management (DEM)

The following is a historical recount of the measures taken and how those measures came to be implemented.

Provincial Response

The Provincial Operations Centre (POC) has been elevated in support of the lead ministry Alberta Health, for the Novel Coronavirus event.

The POC elevated to Operational Level 2 at 0815 hrs, 30 January 2020

The POC elevated to Operational Level 3 at 1200 hrs, 14 March 2020

The POC elevated to Operational Level 4 at 1315 hrs, 17 March 2020

A State of Public Health Emergency was declared by Premier Jason Kenney on 19 March 2020. The POC has been actively tracking the incident for 64 days at the time of this report.

The POC follows the protocol of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the Town receives two daily updates regarding the current response period's objectives.

Mountain View Regional Emergency Management Agency

The Town of Didsbury is part of the Mountain View Regional Emergency Management Agency (MVREMA). Collaboratively, with the other municipalities within Mountain View County, we prepared a Regional Emergency Response Plan. The MVREMA met on March 10, 2020 and the Agency was briefed by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and Dr. Hinshaw on the growing COVID19 concern and AEMA's expectations were outlined. Key takeaways from the brief were:

- Restrictions are coming regarding the number of people attending an event.
- Municipalities are to review Business Continuity Plans and prepare for potential staffing shortages
- Stand up Municipal Emergency Response Centres.

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization declared COVID19 a Global Pandemic March 11, 2020

Town of Didsbury

Relevant documents were being reviewed in February following the POC elevating to Level 2. March 9, 20 all Administrative departments were asked to review the 2008 Business Continuity Plan and evaluate its relevancy. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) met and discussed COVID19 on March 11th.

March 12 at 17:00, Dr. Hinshaw stated:

“On March 12, Alberta announced four new confirmed cases, bringing Alberta’s total to 23.

The following new public health restrictions were also announced:

Alberta is asking organizers to cancel any events that have more than 250 attendees. This includes large sporting events, conferences and community events. It does not extend to places of worship, grocery stores, airports or shopping centres. Any event that has more than 50 attendees and expects to have international participants, or involves critical infrastructure staff, seniors, or other high-risk populations should also be cancelled. Events that do not meet these criteria can proceed, but risk mitigation must be in place, such as sanitizer stations and distancing between attendees. At this time, schools and daycares can remain open but steps should be taken to ensure that no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time. Travel outside of the country is not being recommended at this time. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.”

On March 13th at 08:45 the Emergency Management Team (EMT) was formed.

Following the formation of the EMT, the team quickly addressed Alberta Health’s and the POC’s operational directives. A public notice was posted on the website by 10:45 am indicating the Town’s operational changes associated with the directives. The EMT has been monitoring the daily Health Minister briefings across the country and we are constantly focused on maintaining the directives from Alberta Health and POC to ensure a consistent and transparent message for residents.

Since the beginning of the incident, there have been several support programs launched Federally and Provincially. The programs have required significant time to coordinate and initialize. Our Emergency Social Services Team has done an amazing job working with local organizations and residents looking to offer support services for vulnerable members of our community.

The messages from the Province are clear:

- Our most vulnerable are the top priority
- food and fuel supply lines are secure
- response will be ongoing for several months
- Municipalities need to prepare for multiple simultaneous incidents (fire, flood, tornado, power disruptions, etc.)
- Municipalities are encouraged to provide fiscal relief for individuals and businesses impacted by the virus
- Redundancy planning is necessary for all municipal services

We continue to review operating procedures, sanitization practices, personnel assignments, & resources. It has been 21 days since the EMT was initiated.

Path Forward

The MVREMA is beginning to discuss redundancy support systems for our members. Mutual Aid Agreements cover additional resource coverage not necessarily operational coverage. Currently, there are no regional agreements in place to support other essential services such as water, wastewater, solid waste, or transportation.

Didsbury's approach thus far is to let the Public Health Emergency and the lead Agency drive the response to the pandemic. Should the Town experience a simultaneous incident that we are unable to adequately respond to; as a result of personnel shortages due to COVID19; or any other reason, we would declare a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) if deemed necessary. Redundancy planning can reduce the necessity for a SOLE.

I trust you find this information helpful and I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Craig Fox
Acting DEM



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING Request for Decision (RFD)

Vision: *The Place to Grow.*

Mission: *Creating the Place to Grow.*

COUNCIL MEETING DATE	APRIL 6, 2020
SUBJECT	APPROVAL OF MEASURES SINCE MARCH 16, 2020
ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
AGENDA ITEM	4.1

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

On March 11, 2020 the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO). On March 17, 2020 Alberta declared a public health emergency.

According to *Alberta's Public Health Act*, a state of public health emergency can be made for up to 30 days—but that can increase to 90 days in the event of a 'pandemic influenza.'

On March 25, 2020 the Provincial Government mandated that Albertans are prohibited from gathering in groups of more than 15 people in both indoor and outdoor spaces:

- All gatherings, indoor or outdoor, over 15 people must be cancelled.
- Gatherings in outdoor public spaces are limited to groups of 15 people in one location and must observe 2-metre physical distancing requirements.
- In outdoor spaces where individuals or families are walking, people must observe 2-metre physical distancing requirements.
- Access to all public recreation facilities, private entertainment facilities, bars and nightclubs is prohibited.
- All dine-in services are prohibited.
- Retail, clothing and gaming stores are prohibited from offering services in facilities accessible by the public.
- Visitation to long-term care and other continuing care facilities is limited to essential visitors only.
- Close contact personal services are restricted from providing services to Albertans.

DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES

At the March 16, 2020 Special Council Meeting, Council approved the measures Administration had taken in response to COVID-19 by closing the Town Office and facilities to the public. On March 24, 2020 Administration with consultation of the Mayor made the followings measures:

- Immediate closure of all playgrounds;
- Immediate closure of Rosebud Valley Campground;
- Immediate closure of the porta-potties at Memorial Park;
- Limit of 2 people at a time at the dog park;
- Close sports fields to all group activities, however allow single individual or immediate family while observing the 2-metre physical distancing requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Town of Didsbury Council approve the following measures in response to COVID-19:

- Close all playgrounds;
- Close Rosebud Valley Campground;
- Close the porta-potties at Memorial Park;
- Limit of 2 people at a time at the dog park;
- Close sports fields to all group activities, however allow single individual or immediate family while observing the 2-metre physical distancing requirements.



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING Request for Decision (RFD)

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COUNCIL MEETING DATE	APRIL 6, 2020
SUBJECT	MUNICIPAL RELIEF MEASURES
ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
AGENDA ITEM	4.2

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

The COVID-19 pandemic is having significant impact in Didsbury and around the world. In response to this, Administration has considered different options to put in place regarding potential deferrals of utility and tax payments in order to provide immediate relief support to our residents and business owners.

Section 347(1) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) allows for the cancellation, reduction, refund or deferral of taxes, if Council considers it equitable to do so.

Administration has been in contact with several other communities to understand their approach to the shared issues and have been closely following measures put in place by the Provincial and Federal governments.

DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES

Administration is proposing seven recommendations to help alleviate financial strains for property owners regarding upcoming utility/property tax payments.

1. Administration recommends an option to defer utility payments up to 90 days, backdated to April 1, 2020. Upon application to the utility department, customers will have the option to defer utility payments for the April, May and June 2020 billing periods without penalties applied to the deferred amounts. The deferred balance would be split over the remainder of the year with no penalties or interest applied. During this time no penalties would be applied to any over-due account, nor would balances greater than 60 days in arrears be transferred to tax accounts. As well, we will not disconnect services at this time.
2. Administration recommends an option to defer for property owners currently enrolled in the Tax Instalment Payment Plan (TIPP) program for property tax payments. Upon application, property owners will have the option to 'hold' their account and suspend payment for three months, with the balance owing split evenly over the remaining six months of the year. No penalties will apply to the deferred amounts. Under regular circumstances if payments are missed under the TIPP program, they would be removed from the program and penalties would apply. Alternatively, property owners can leave the program altogether, and would owe the entire balance by the due date stipulated in the tax bylaw, once passed.
3. Administration also recommends waiving all Non-Sufficient Fund (NSF) charges for 90 days on returned TIPP and Pre-Authorized Utility Payments (Auto-debit), back dated to April 1, 2020.
4. Currently there are 3 properties in tax arrears and up for public auction in 2020. Administration is recommending to suspend the public auction until 2021.
5. Tax Notices are typically issued with a 30 day payment period, after which penalties are applied. Administration is recommending to extend the payment period to 90 days from the time the tax notices are issued.
6. Administration currently charges 2.5% administration fee if taxes are paid using credit card. Administration is recommending to waive the 2.5% administration fee for those paying taxes by credit card for the 2020 tax year.
7. Overdue Accounts Receivable are charged a 1.5% penalty on amounts owing. Administration is recommending to waive the 1.5% penalty for 90 days.



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Although there will be a financial effect to these programs, it is difficult to estimate how many property owners will access these programs at this time. The Town relies on the payment plans for cash flow purposes. Approximately \$300,000 in auto-debit payments are received each month which helps to fund the operations of the Town.

It is expected that there will be significant work to administer these programs and that customers may see delays in having their applications processed.

Administration considered other measures which would affect all property owners, which may result in less administrative work, however may result in cash flow deficiencies for the Town. It is understood that while some are experiencing financial hardships, others are not, therefore Administration determined that addressing needs on a case-by-case basis is most advantageous for the Town and its stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION *(7 separate motions)*

1. That the Town of Didsbury Council direct Administration to provide an option for property owners to defer utility payments for the April, May and June 2020 billing periods while eliminating penalties during this time, with the deferred balance to be evenly applied over the payments for the remainder of the calendar year.
2. That the Town of Didsbury Council direct Administration to provide an option for property owners on the Tax Installment Payment Plan (TIPP) to defer property tax payments for the months of April, May and June 2020 without penalties applied to the deferred amounts, and the deferred balance evenly applied over the remainder of the calendar year.
3. That the Town of Didsbury Council direct Administration to waive all Non-Sufficient Fund (NSF) charges for the 90 day period beginning April 1, 2020.
4. That the Town of Didsbury Council direct Administration to suspend all public auctions until 2021.
5. That the Town of Didsbury Council direct Administration to extend the Tax Notice payment period to 90 days from the time the tax notices are issued.
6. That the Town of Didsbury Council direct Administration to waive the 2.5% administration fee for those paying taxes by credit card for the 2020 tax year.
7. That the Town of Didsbury Council direct Administration to waive the 1.5% penalty charge for Account Receivables for 90 days.



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING Request for Decision (RFD)

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COUNCIL MEETING DATE	APRIL 6, 2020
SUBJECT	FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS
ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
AGENDA ITEM	4.3

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

At the March 16, 2020 Special Council Meeting, Council suspended Council Meetings until the April 6, 2020 Special Council Meeting.

Administration has researched what other municipalities are doing relating to Council meetings is listed below for Council's information.

DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES

Trochu	Down to one meeting in April will reassess in late April.
Carstairs	Earliest a meeting would be called is April 27 via video conference call.
Olds	Cancelled the March 23 RCM & the April 6 P&P. Held meeting April 2 nd , via ZOOM Meetings.
MVC	Cancelled March 25 th meeting, met April 2 nd in the morning via ZOOM.
Sundre	SCM on March 20 th via teleconference, cancelled all meetings to end of April. Will reassess end of April.
Beiseker	No meetings were cancelled - meeting via GoToMeeting software.
Airdrie	Using Skype to maintain RCM schedule. Next meeting they will deal with temporarily transferring MPC powers to staff.
Linden	Cancelled March 23 & April 13 RCMs - will hold electronic meeting April 27.
Cochrane	No meetings cancelled - RCMs held via Teams App.
Innisfail	No meetings cancelled - RCMs held via Zoom.
Crossfield	No change in meeting schedule - will be live streaming the meetings for public.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Town of Didsbury Council suspend Regular Council Meetings until the regularly scheduled April 28, 2020.

OR

A resolution at Council's discretion.