



Council report

Meeting date:	March 2, 2021
Title:	COVID-19 Municipal Operations Update
Reviewed by:	Laura Johnston, CAO

Recommendation

That report COVID-19 Municipal Operations Update be received for information.

Executive summary

The Government of Ontario issued a stay-at-home order for the province on December 26, 2020 and has extended the order twice, once on January 14, 2021 and again on February 9, 2021 under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. The Grey Bruce Health Unit entered into the framework for reopening on February 16, 2021.

The Municipality of West Grey remains under its declared state of emergency, and the municipality's Emergency Control Group (ECG) meets regularly to remain informed and make critical and time-sensitive decisions. The ECG is now meeting monthly, or at the call of the chair, and reports on community activity or responses to the pandemic as well as receiving clarity on directives from the province and public health.

Standing meetings with public health, meetings hosted by Bruce Power, and meetings with the South Bruce Grey Health Services continue.

This report provides departmental updates since the last report of June 28, 2020.

Background and discussion

Since the June 28, 2020 report to committee of the whole, the municipal office opened to the public with limited hours to allow for extensive cleaning. A province-wide stay-at-home-order was in effect until February 16, 2021, which started on December 26, 2020. West Grey continues to act in accordance with provincial orders and guidelines by adhering to the advice and direction from public health and enforcement professionals.

West Grey Emergency Control Group has had 51 meetings as of Feb 12, 2021. The main objective is to ensure West Grey follows the directives and operates with in the recommend Public Health Guidelines set out by Dr. Arra, Medical Officer of Health, and his team at Grey Bruce Public Health, as it lines up with the provincial guidelines, and aligns with keeping our



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citizens and employees safe. West Grey employees continue to be diligent while at work and when dealing with the public. Personal protection and sanitization continues at all West Grey facilities and offices. Contact tracing is also in place.

The situation report from Grey Bruce Health is emailed daily to control group members, staff and is published on their website <https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca> for the general public.

West Grey facilities continue to remain closed to the public. Recreation staff are working with public health and relevant agencies to plan for safe reopening of facilities. Planning has started for modified summer programs and staff have prepared and submitted a number of grant applications for several upcoming projects. Recreation staff has completed a “rates and fees” review and continue updating relevant operating standards and procedures.

West Grey’s building department has continued to answer all calls and emails, receive permits, issue permits and complete all inspections with protective policies in place. During the lock down starting January 12, 2021, no new construction could start unless it was considered essential or a permit was issued prior to January 12, 2021. No inspections were done in occupied houses. As of February 16, 2021, all construction is considered essential and allowed to start again. All inspections including occupied houses has resumed.

Bylaw and animal control continue to work as contracted with limited contact and safety procedures in place. The Provincial Offences Court has been closed for a majority of 2020 and has created a problem getting compliance and charges through the court during that time. The court has opened starting in February and will review limited cases by zoom, but with the large backlog and slower procedures on zoom the disruption will continue for the remainder of 2021.

Planning is continuing to receive and review all applications for zoning bylaw revisions, consents and minor variances.

Administration staff continue working full-time. The business continuity plan was enacted on January 12, 2021 with one “inside staff team” and one “remote staff team”. Protective equipment, additional cleaning supplies and signage were ordered to prepare for the reopening of the municipal office, which took effect February 22, 2021.

Committees of council are now able to meet using the zoom virtual platform. The Community Improvement Plan has been adopted and applications are now being accepted. A public meeting was held in December for the draft Official Plan and a communications plan was presented recently to ensure engagement in this project.

The municipality continues to communicate with the community as services and facilities reopen and new public health protocols come into place. The West Grey social media channels share accurate and timely information about new guidelines and municipal



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announcements. A continued up-to-date list of information is listed on the municipality's new website with links to latest information from the province.

West Grey Public Library has offered curbside pick-up service, up to and including the month of February. The library has continued virtual delivery of programs, as well as offering a variety of kits for pick-up, such as cognitive care kits, snowshoes, and tinker kits (craft kits for kids). This service is expected to expand over the coming months. Delivery to Rockwood Terrace, Serenity and homebound individuals has continued and increased over the past six months. Helping patrons with the online catalog, selecting materials, continues. Library staff are also offering photocopying, faxing and scanning via curbside. Reduced hours will remain until at least the end of March. The library's Chief Executive Officer is in regular contact with the municipality's CAO to coordinate operations and provide updates.

Training for the West Grey Fire Department stopped in December when the lock down began. Weekly equipment and truck checks continue with only four or five firefighters at a time at the stations, who are assigned to various tasks. Training will resume once the lockdown is lifted but only in platoons with one platoon per night and no more than 10 firefighters at the station during training. The office of the Fire Chief remains open but the front door is locked and contact tracing is in place.

West Grey Police Service has developed a COVID-19 policy and IT personnel have developed an app for contact tracing and questionnaire with guidelines outlined by Grey Bruce Public Health. Personal Protective Equipment has been purchased and sourced from local government, provincial government and local businesses. A fogger has been purchased for disinfecting office, cruisers, prisoners, cell area, etc. The office was closed to the public and contract tracing is in effect. Additional reporting to municipal, provincial and federal governments has been required and COVID-19 quarantine checks from RCMP and CBSA Have occurred. Screening questions for all contacts with any persons prior to police engagement continue. The police service has seen an increase in calls for service. Auxiliary Constables have been suspended on two occasions from attending the service. There have been 101 calls for service relating to COVID-19, with five COVID-19 related charges issued.

Legal and legislated requirements

Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

Financial and resource implications

Phase 1 Safe Restart Funding in the amount of \$359,700 was received by West Grey. Direct costs include various items such as PPE, plexi-glass panels, sanitizer supplies, signage, work from home setup, etc. The lost revenues include, waived penalty/interest, decreased investment income, cancelled facility rentals, etc. Below is a summary of the estimated impact



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of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations during 2020:

Direct Costs Incurred	\$44,464
Lost Revenues	\$315,135
Total Operating Pressures	\$359,599

Analysis will continue on the operating costs reductions associated with closure of municipal facilities and cancellation/modification of recreation programs. Surplus funds, if any will be transferred to reserve to offset further operating pressures of COVID-19 during 2021.

Staffing implications

No implications.

Consultation

Emergency Control Group
Public Health
West Grey staff

Alignment to strategic vision plan

Pillar: Work together
Goal: Clear communication
Strategy: Improve internal communications

Attachments

None.

Next steps

Senior staff and the emergency control group will continue monitoring and responding accordingly in consultation with public health and in compliance with provincial orders and legislation.

Respectfully submitted:

Laura Johnston, CAO