

Overview:

Staff has been diligently working to reopen the municipal office and facilities in a safe, effective and responsible way. At the Staff Meeting on August 18, 2020, various topics were discussed, including mandatory masks, opening procedures and the best way to deliver services to the public while keeping the public and staff safe. The goal is to reopen the office to the public the week of September 8, 2020 barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Peterborough Public Health has provided multitudes of resources for organizations to utilize in working towards re-opening. We have taken advantage of these resources by ensuring that we have provided the most effective safety procedures possible. At the start of the pandemic, we had the majority of staff working remotely with a skeleton team in the office. As we have learned more about Covid-19 and with the softening of gathering regulations, we have introduced more staff into the office in a teams approach. Where possible, employees have worked from home with the number of staff in the office being controlled by space allocations and the need to reduce risk by splitting the office into teams. All employees at every work site complete a screening process before entering the office and curbside deliveries and transactions are frequently utilized. The team approach has been successful in maximizing physical distancing and insuring that we are properly staffed to serve the needs of the community.

In late July, a staff survey was circulated to poll staff on their comfort level and safety concerns with providing in-person services, the methods to provide services, entrances, cleaning, washrooms and more. In-person services that will be provided are similar to pre-Covid-19 including any type of payment transaction, retrieval of garbage tags, burn permits for those who cannot use the new system, the sale of blue boxes and composters, access to the roll book and other front counter services. For more specialised services such as questions regarding planning, building permits or in-depth tax questions, patrons will be requested to book appointment to ensure that staff will be able to effectively address their situations. The preferred method for booking appointments is via Zoom or by phone, in-person appointments will be a last resort or for those who need accessibility accommodations.

We have worked hard to ensure that the best physical controls in place for our staff and customers. Glass barriers have been installed at the front counter, along with changing the layout to ensure physical distancing for customers. Some changes to the office space included altering the layout of the desks, moving staff to other spaces (i.e. roads staff moving to the basement boardroom when needed, Parks and Rec staff working from the community centres, staff using unoccupied office spaces, etc.), creating one way routes in the office and having staggered days in and out of the office.

Furthermore, staff have updated policies and procedures to ensure that everyone is provided with the right tools to stay safe. A mandatory mask policy has also been

created in order to provide guidance, training and knowledge on the expectations of staff and patrons while within the municipal office. Additional IT support has also been implemented to ensure that those staff working from alternative locations are able to work efficiently while also protecting the security of the Township's information and systems.

Staff has created a front counter procedure for administrative staff to utilize when we allow patrons to enter the office for front counter services. When patrons enter the vestibule, there will be signs that provide information on the transactions we will be providing and how to enter the office. Automatic remote door openers were installed on the vestibule and office doors, which allows staff to open the doors from a distance for the patrons, reducing the need for patrons to touch the doors. Patrons will enter through the vestibule, complete their transaction and exit through the Town Hall in order to prevent more than one patron in the main entrance, maximizing physical distancing. There will be no more than two patrons in the office at one time, we have created two appropriate transaction areas to accommodate necessity transactions. This procedure has been tested by staff, is proven to work and will maximize safety protocols.

Touchless hand sanitizers have been placed throughout the municipal office and Town Hall and each employee been provided with face covering and personal hand sanitizers at their desks. Staff have been trained on how to properly wear face covering, proper hand washing/sanitizing techniques, physical distancing and cleaning practices within the office. We have also increased our cleaning customs, ensuring we wipe down surfaces after use and using disinfectant spray on all handles and high touch surfaces at the end of the work day.

Conclusion: These reopening policies, procedures and processes for the municipality are essential tools to ensure that the reopening of the office is a safe and smooth transition. There may be additional resources used or changes be made on the existing practices, depending on how the initial weeks go after opening and if there are any changes to the public health guidelines and regulations.

Recommendation:

That the C.A.O.-2020-45 report, dated August 25, 2020, regarding the re-opening of the municipal office be received and that staff continue to monitor any changes made by public health officials directly influencing day-to-day operation at the Municipality.

Financial Impact: The financial impacts of these changes are being captured by staff through a Covid-19 project code. The Province has recently announced that the Township will be receiving funding to offset the costs associated with Covid-19 and the safe restart of the local economy. Staff are also investigations new Federal grant program that will also support the safe restart of the local economy and enhancements to digital service delivery.

Strategic Plan Applicability: To ensure and enable an effective, efficient and safe municipal administration.

Sustainability Plan Applicability: N/A