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## **Press Release- COVID Response**

April 29, 2020

As part of our ongoing management of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to share some of the steps being taken to assist our residents during these difficult times. Administration presented Council with a variety of options to reduce spending and therefore reduce any impact to municipal taxes. I am pleased to announce that Council has tentatively approved budget reductions of \$138,652 from the current operating budget. These cuts are a result of not filling vacant positions and the decision not to hire additional summer staff. The result will be a 0% budget increase for 2020. We have made a conscious effort to keep staff employed, thereby contributing to our economy as well as ensuring we continue to provide effective service delivery to our residents.

Council has also implemented a utility payment deferral for those affected by the pandemic. The Province originally provided a deferral from March 18<sup>th</sup> to June 18<sup>th</sup>, Council has approved the deferral period from March 18<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. We will continue to provide utility arrears notices; however, no disconnections will be done during this period. Payment may also now be made by credit card to assist utility account holders with cash flow.

In addition, Council approved a change for the property tax due date from July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> and changed the tax penalty to be split instead of 10% effective July 1<sup>st</sup> to a 5% penalty-imposed September 1<sup>st</sup> and a 5% penalty November 1<sup>st</sup>. We are also in the process of implementing a new payment system to allow for tax and utility payments by credit card. Council and administration are mindful of the impact this pandemic has created, and by taking these steps we believe they will help those who need the help most.

As you are aware, all Town facilities are currently closed and all programs and events in which people gather have been cancelled until further notice. This includes the Seniors Block Party and Summer Programs. The Premier has suggested that some relaxation of restrictions may be forthcoming. Considering this, we will be making a decision regarding the pool operation by May 15<sup>th</sup> – assuming any restrictions can be addressed. Our FCSS department is also available should you require information related to mental health or other social supports. Our goal is to maintain services in an as normal practice as possible.

Respectfully,

Larry Davidson  
Town Manager