



June 18, 2020

Statement from Mayor Ken Hewitt & Council

The Federal government has extended the CERB for another 8 weeks. As we begin to see things opening up I hope individuals who are using that program have more options and will begin to see their reliance on the CERB dissipate. Both Federal and Provincial governments will be announcing soon how it may play a role in filling the municipal deficits due to COVID-19.

By law, a municipal government cannot run a deficit; their budgets must be balanced each and every year. Currently we are exposed to \$1.9 million in non-budgeted COVID expenses and while we booked in this past budget \$500k, we are short \$1.4 million. We hope that we will see some relief to help offset these costs so that we do not either have to tax for it or use our already allocated reserves. We have healthy reserves but they are not just sitting there for a rainy day; they are earmarked for replacing buildings, equipment etc.

Tomorrow, Haldimand-Norfolk enters into stage 2 as described by the Province. Port Maitland Pier will be opening along with beaches. We have asked staff to monitor and to make best efforts to keep people safe in those areas. We are looking to open libraries and museums around the end of June.

The County is planning on opening the pools with a plan and we will be given more details shortly. Look for reduced numbers and strategies to support the local residents. Splash pads are likely not going to reopen as they are similar to the playground equipment and keeping the kids safe is much more challenging. There will be NO day camps in Haldimand this season.

Restaurants are able to open with patio service only. You can contact the health unit and they will help you with you safety plan, as well as Lidy Romanuk in our economic development division.

I have been asked if there are programs at the municipal level to help our businesses; grants, not loans specifically. In Ontario, it is illegal and against the Municipal Act that we are governed by to offer any financial incentive to businesses under any circumstances. It is considered bonusing and comes with heavy penalties. Only a program such as the CIP program that was designed to help and incentivize businesses to fix their exteriors are available. The CIP program still needed to be approved by the Province.

In many other Provinces and States, rules are different and while I believe we should have some latitude to help either attract new business or work with local business, in Ontario it is not possible. The Province and the Feds do however try to work with businesses in establishing many different funding programs



throughout the various Ministries. Again, Lidy with the County's economic development team can assist you to guide you through them to see if there is one that may fit your needs.

Haldimand County is nearing the completion of its new Admin building and since March we have had staff, those working and not from home located at this new building. We have yet to officially open it and we are excited to share this state of the art building with the general public. It is our hope to have our first in person council meeting on June 30th in the new council chambers. Social distancing will apply as well as other safety protocols.

I am happy to say that throughout the month of June we have been bringing staff back to work and we should have everyone back within the next month.

If you are a business that can now begin to open under the new rules, the provincial website link is:

<https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/04/health-and-safety-association-guidance-documents-for-workplaces-during-the-covid-19-outbreak.html>

Stay Safe,

Mayor Ken Hewitt