

**April 9, 2020 - UPDATED**

**REPORT TO COUNCIL – 2020 – 05 - JH**

**SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Quote from the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario**

*“There is no place better prepared than Ontario to respond to the COVID-19 emergency, manage through it effectively, and to rebuild prosperity through a period of recovery. Municipalities will support the province, our communities, and enterprises large and small, every step of the way.”*

Over the past four weeks, the Township of Pelee has been closely monitoring and responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Our response is being led by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, (WECHU) and we are also working collaboratively with the County of Essex, regional municipalities, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. The situation is rapidly changing, and further updates are provided as information becomes available.

The health and safety of our residents, our municipal employees and our community continues to be a major priority. I want to take this time to commend the Council and municipal staff for their hard work and dedication. It is the ongoing efforts of Council and staff and the co-operation of our entire community that will keep our citizens safe.

It is important that we work together and know that across all levels of government, we are doing all we can to protect our residents, but we also need the public to consider the seriousness of the situation.

**Stay home, stay safe and stay informed.**

The Township encourages residents to follow updates from the [Windsor Essex County Health Unit](#). Local updates and information will still be provided on the Township’s website and social media channels.

To date the Township has declared a State of Emergency as it relates to our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was done not to illicit fear, but rather to ensure the municipality is well poised to respond to challenges in a timely and efficient manner. This declaration reinforces our commitment to working collaboratively with all of our partnering municipalities, government officials, first responder agencies and healthcare organizations to ensure we are as best prepared as possible to respond to the needs of our residents.

The Township meets weekly with the Essex – Windsor – Pelee - Chatham-Kent CAO’s Emergency Planning Group to ensure a consistent regional response to COVID-19.

We have implemented all requirements of the provincial and federal emergency orders and continue to provide essential services only.

Pursuant to Provincial and Federal orders, we have closed all municipal facilities to the public, including all parks, public beaches, the marina, East Park Campground, and all municipal buildings. We have asked the community to respect these decisions.

We have modified and put in place COVID-19 protocols to ensure the safety of our employees who continue to work to provide essential services related to our water, roads, transfer station and municipal administration.

We have been meeting regularly with the Ministry of Transportation and the Owen Sound Transportation Company to ensure the provision of safe transportation to/from the island.

We have provided financial relief measures to lessen the COVID-19 impact on residents and business by waiving penalties and interest and will continue to assess the situation to ensure we, as a municipality are doing everything we can during this unprecedented time.

We have provided information and access to available resources for our business community to assist them in making decisions. A summary of these supports is provided in Appendix attached to this report.

Economic recovery will be a challenge during the coming months, we ask our community to support our business community and seasonal operations as they return to our community and are faced with difficult decisions and challenges related to opening their establishments. They are a vital part of our economy they need our support.

## **CHALLENGES:**

### **Provide clear, consistent and reliable information.**

As municipal leaders, we have significant local networks. We are using these resources to amplify and share messages from our municipality and other official sources.

We have been Retweeting and sharing messages from our local health unit, our municipality, from the Ontario Government's official social media feeds, and from the Federal Government.

As a municipality, we cannot stress enough to the community to stay focussed and encourage everyone to refer to the most accurate source of information when viewing social media feeds. The municipality will continue its approach of sharing the latest quality local information from the health unit, the province and the federal government on municipal sites.

Residents should continue to look to the most accurate source of information on our social media feeds and municipal webpage.

### **Transportation**

The Township is working with the Province and the Owen Sound Transportation Company to ensure safe transportation to and from the island.

Although the Premier and Canada's Medical Officer of Health have openly encouraged people to refrain from travelling to seasonal homes during this period of time, the municipality has no authority to prevent travel to and from the island. To respectfully provide perspective, there are 1,000s of people who travel into Windsor every day for groceries, etc. The City cannot close its borders or refuse entry because they are not residents.

The onus is on every individual/ resident/cottager to make their OWN informed decision if their travel is essential. The municipality encourages everyone to make this decision in the best interest of their community and neighbouring communities.

Part of the uniqueness of our community is our diversity – we are Canadian, we are American, we are permanent residents and we are seasonal residents and cottagers. We all love our island and are respectful of our community. We need to work together to get through these difficult times.

We can, at best, respectfully request that seasonal residents and permanent residents coming to/or returning to the island from any mainland trip, please follow WECHU guidelines and self-isolate for a period of fourteen days upon arrival.

### **To protect yourself from COVID-19:**

- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly;
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue
- Keep surface clean and disinfected;
- Stay home unless essential to go out and stay home when you are sick;
- Practice physical distancing (2 metres).

The WECHU encourages the public to follow credible sources for information about COVID-19. The WECHU monitors and updates its website daily including case counts for Windsor and Essex County. For up-to-date facts visit [www.wechu.org](http://www.wechu.org).

Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, residents should visit the websites of the [Windsor-Essex County Health Unit](#), [Public Health Ontario](#) and [Public Health Canada](#).

### **Next Steps (Updated to April 17, 2020)**

Township staff are currently working to manage and proactively plan for the impacts of COVID-19 on the following and will post accurate information related to council decisions as it becomes available. Please monitor our Website and Social Media feeds for the most current information.

1. 2020 Pheasant Hunt – On April 14, 2020 Council made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Annual Pheasant Hunt. A copy of the 2020 hunt proposal as presented to Council and rejected by recorded vote has been posted to the municipal website.

2. Advertising and Promotion – On April 14, 2020 Council accepted the recommendation of the Tourism, Economic Development Advisory and Hunt Committee and deferred the publication of the 2020 Tourism Experience Guide (Printed Brochure) until 2021. Participants will be contacted within the next 8 weeks to determine refunds/transfer options.
3. Operating Budgets – Administration continues to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 on its 2020 approved operating budget. Capital Budgets are impacted by essential constructions regulations; however, staff are working to ensure these projects are shovel ready when restrictions are lifted. Essential capital works continue to progress.
4. Shoreline Protection – The Township is working co-operatively with senior levels of government to address the immediate restoration of shoreline impacted by recent extreme weather events and is also working toward a longer-term solution.
5. Transportation Services – The Township is liaising with the Ministry of Transportation and the Owen Sound Transportation Company to ensure safe transportation to and from the island.
6. OPP Policing – The Township has posted information on its website to advise residents how to report COVID-19 concerns. For all other police matters requiring assistance please continue to call the OPP Communications Centre at 1-888-310-1122 – your call will be responded to using the most appropriate policing resource.
7. Economic Recovery – Business Retention – The Township is currently working to schedule a virtual Tourism/Economic Development Advisory meeting that will present a public forum for the discussion of mutually important issues. Businesses are encouraged to attend and participate, as well public are allowed to listen in. Please watch our website for updates.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Hensel  
Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk

## Appendix “A” Business Support Programs

### FEDERAL SUPPORTS

Department of Finance – An overview of the [Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#) which can support individuals who have lost their job, are taking care of a family member, or are still employed, but are not receiving income as a result of COVID-19.

Office of the Prime Minister – Details on the [Prime Minister’s plan to Mobilize Industry](#) to fight COVID-19.

Business Credit Availability Program – A \$10 billion fund administered by [Business Development Canada](#) and [Export Development Canada](#)

[Resources for Businesses](#) – A list of resources on topics such as supporting employees, financial implications and business preparedness, business travel and events, and exporting and international business

Employment and Social Development Canada – [A list of resources of Benefits and Services](#) on topics including employment insurance, work-sharing program, the labour program and federally regulated workplaces, and the repayment of student loans

[Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#) provides an overview of the Federal Government’s announced support for Canadians and Businesses

Support for Businesses topics include:

- Supporting Canadian Businesses Through the Canada Account
- Helping Businesses Keep Their Workers
- Flexibility for Businesses Filing Taxes
- Ensuring Businesses have Access to Credit
- Supporting Financial Market Liquidity

### PROVINCIAL SUPPORTS

- Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries – The Ministry has convened a series of [advisory groups with leading sector stakeholders](#)

- Ministry of Finance – The Cabinet Committee will be performing [consultations with big and small businesses](#) across the province
- Office of the Premier – New legislation to come on [job protections for workers](#) who take leave from work
- Office of the Premier – An overview of the Employment Standards Amendment Act which provides [job-protected leave to employees](#) in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19, or those who need to be away from work to care for children because of school or day care closures or to care for other relatives

## OTHER RESOURCES

Canadian Chamber of Commerce – [Pandemic preparedness for businesses](#)

Conference Board of Canada – A [daily COVID-19 economic update](#)