Date: 2020-09-02

From: Kassie Rocca, Director of Finance

Subject COVID 19 Municipal Operating Funding Phase 1

Report FIN2020-10

Recommendation

That Council of the Township of Georgian Bluffs approves the hiring of an additional facilities attendant for a twelve month contract in order to implement new COVID 19 protective measures at Township Facilities.

Background

On March 27, 2020, an emergency was declared in the Township of Georgian Bluffs to assist with the containment of COVID-19. Georgian Bluffs parks and arenas were closed for several months and financial relief measures were put in place to assist Georgian Bluffs residents. As a result, Georgian Bluffs saw a decrease in revenues in several areas of our business, as well as incurred costs to implement health and safety measures to protect staff and residents from COVID-19.

On August 12, 2020, the Township received notice from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that we would be receiving $318,000 to support the Township’s COVID-19 operating costs and pressures. The funding is being received under phase 1 of the Ontario governments Safe Restart Agreement. The Township is accountable for using this funding for the purpose of addressing priority COVID-19 operating costs and pressures. If all of the funding is not used during 2020, it is expected that excess funds will be placed into reserves to be assessed to support COVID-19 pressures that may continue to incur in 2021.

Analysis

The Township will be expected to report back to the province in March 2021 with details on our 2020 COVID-19 operating costs and pressures, our overall 2020 financial
position and the use of provincial funds. The following costs and pressures related to COVID-19 have been identified to date:

**Waived Penalty and Interest**

Interest was waived on tax and water account for April-June. Based on outstanding balances at the end of each month, lost penalty and interest revenue totals $51,814.

**Dog Tag Revenue**

Ratepayers were unable to attend the office to pay for their dog tags and online payments are not yet in place for this fee. As such, Council decided to waive the $10 increase in dog tag fees that was supposed to be applied May 15th. Lost revenue for waiving this fee totals $4,090.

**Lost Bag Tag Revenue**

Council allowed ratepayers to place their garbage bags out without bag tags from April to June 15th. This was done so that people would not have to go to the store to buy bag tags when the provincial government was directing people to stay home as much as possible. Estimated lost revenues for bag tags are $5,760.

**Airport Fees**

The pandemic has decreased traffic at the airport. Less traffic results in less fuel sales, landing fees, and parking fees. Based on the same period in 2019, it is estimated COVID-19 has resulted in lost revenues of $32,236 at the airport to date.

**PPE & Safety supply purchases**

In order to bring staff back to the offices and depots and to open the administration building to the public, a number of protective equipment was purchased to protect staff and the public. Hand sanitizers, gloves, face masks, additional cleaning supplies, sneeze guards and a door buzzer system are a few of the items bought to safeguard against COVID-19. PPE & Safety supplies purchased to date total $10,389.

**Online Council Meeting Equipment**

With limitations on gathering of groups, Council meetings moved online and were livestreamed beginning in April 2020. Equipment was needed in order to facilitate online meetings. Total equipment purchases totalled $26,211.

**Lost Arena rentals**
When the emergency in the Township was declared, community centres were immediately closed. Staff are still working on developing procedures to get the facilities open again. Lost revenues to date for our facilities total $34,604. Even when facilities reopen, revenues will continue to be effected as user groups determine if they are able to operate this year.

Total of lost revenues and additional costs summarized above related to the COVID-19 pandemic to date: $165,104.

Cost are still ongoing with the ever changing COVID-19 protocols put in place by the Ontario government and local public health.

Staff are currently working to reopen our recreation facilities to the public. Township Facilities staff have developed a number of precautionary measures and guidelines to be put in place when our facilities reopen to the public. Measures include restricting access to our community centres for scheduled users only; enhanced cleaning procedures between rentals; COVID-19 screening tools for users; and separate entrances and exits in and out of the facilities. These measures are in addition to enhanced cleaning procedures being conducted by facilities staff at our municipal office as well as our parks. Additional cleaning practices have increased the work load of existing facilities staff. With the reopening of the Shallow Lake community centre and other facilities, additional staff are needed to implement the new COVID-19 precautionary measures. At this time, it is recommended a temporary full time facilities attendant be hired to assist with the additional duties. A contract term of one year will allow Township staff to implement these new measures and work with the procedures over a period time to find efficiencies as well as identify best practices for scheduling facility use and COVID-19 cleaning procedures. Phase 1 funding will be used to cover the cost of the additional staff as enhanced cleaning practices are an operating pressure created by COVID-19. The cost of this additional position is estimated to be $60,000.

**Financial Impact**

To date, $165,104 of lost revenues and additional expenses has been incurred by the Township as a direct result of COVID-19. Should Council approve an additional facilities attendant position, an additional $60,000 will be spent. This leaves $92,896 of the provincial grant remaining to assist the Township with ongoing COVID-19 costs.

**Strategic Priorities**

5. Deliver Effective and Cost-Efficient Services

The Township will strive to be a leader in municipal and customer service excellence. We will continue to offer remarkable service to those we serve. We will promote operational excellence by focusing on fiscal responsibility. The corporation will be fiscally prudent and we will invest in our staff to attract the best employees.
Conclusion

The Province of Ontario has provided emergency assistance to the Township in the amount of $318,000 to assist with COVID-19 operating costs and pressures. Staff recommend using a portion of this grant to hire an additional facilities attended to assist with the implementation of precautionary measures at Township facilities.

Original signed by: Kassandra Rocca, Director of Finance / Treasurer

Report Approval Details

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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

John Norton, Chief Administrative Officer