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**Date:** 2021-10-06

**From:** Brittany Drury, Interim CAO / Clerk

**Subject** Staff Appreciation Initiative

**Report** LEG2021-29

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## Recommendation

That report LEG2021-29, Staff Appreciation Initiative, be received for information, and

That all staff be provided 1 (one) day in lieu, to be used by the end of 2021, and

That said day in lieu be applied to a full-day closure of the Township Administration Offices on December 24, 2021 and December 31, 2021.

## Background

Effective March 27, 2020, the Township of Georgian Bluffs declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Said declaration remains in effect today, 549 days later.

The Township, Province of Ontario, and the nation as a whole, have been required to pivot and amend service delivery structures immensely and repeatedly since March 2020. To name a few, the Township has successfully implemented the following throughout the pandemic:

- Electronic meetings, including electronic participation of the public,
- Livestreaming of all meetings,
- Hybrid meetings, with respect to physical distancing,
- Online payments and services,
- Continuation of facilities and operations services to no interruption, and
- Successful maintenance of all Township business.

Most recently, staff have developed policies and operating procedures to govern vaccine certification processes at Township arenas, in accordance with Provincial regulations.

## Analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic, while limited in ‘silver linings’, has demonstrated and highlighted the importance of mental health, both in personal and professional circumstances. With 1 in 5 adults reporting increased levels of stress, anxiety, loneliness and feelings of isolation, nationwide<sup>1</sup>, it is incumbent on all persons, employers included, to recognise the importance and value of mental health in the workplace and beyond.

In partnership with Council, the Senior Management Team would like to propose a staff appreciation initiative, to recognize efforts, which have and continue to go above and beyond expectations of service. In recognition of these efforts, all staff are proposed to be provided 1 (one) day in lieu. As Council will recall, Township Administration Offices are scheduled to be closed effective noon (12:00 p.m.) on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. For office staff, this additional day in lieu would be applied to the remaining half days on both holidays, thereby closing the office for the entirety of both days, rather than the formerly scheduled half. In recognizing that Operations and Facilities staff are required to maintain services outside of regular business hours, including holidays, staff in both departments will be provided one day in lieu, to be used as they see fit, in conjunction with their supervisor. For payroll purposes, it is recommended that this day be used prior to the end of the 2021 calendar year. This measure will ensure equity amongst all members of staff, regardless of department.

Staff appreciation and morale are imperative to ensuring an effective, positive working environment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many staff appreciation events have been cancelled / postponed due to gathering restrictions. Approval of this initiative will exemplify acknowledgement of staff’s efforts in a tangible, thoughtful way, which all staff will appreciate and benefit from. Further, it will encourage staff to disconnect from their working environment and spend time prioritizing their mental health by decompressing from the stresses of everyday life.

Both Council and the Senior Management Team recognize the impact the pandemic has had on society, staff, the public and the Township as a whole. Together, we can

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210318/dq210318a-eng.htm>

grow through the lessons of the pandemic, and become a more enhanced, supportive team in the process.

### Financial Impact

Salaries and benefits are budgeted for annually via the annual budget process. As all salaries have been allocated and are paid per payroll procedures, addition of 1 day in lieu will have limited to no financial impact to the Township. From a payroll perspective, there is no difference in providing a day in lieu to payment of a regular working day.

This appreciation initiative is not projected to continue into 2022, and is viewed as a one-time appreciation event, to recognize the additional efforts and stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Strategic Priorities

The recommendation as included in this report achieves the fifth strategic goal, Deliver Effective and Cost-Efficient Services, as included in the 2020-2024 Township of Georgian Bluffs Strategic Plan.

### Conclusion

The Township is home to a dedicated, passionate compliment of staff who are dedicated to servicing the Georgian Bluffs community. In partnership with Council, the Senior Management Team recommends implementation of the outlined appreciation initiative, for observance through the remainder of 2021.

Respectfully Submitted: Brittany Drury, Interim CAO / Clerk

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	LEG2021-29 - Staff Appreciation Initiative .docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Sep 29, 2021

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

Jenn Burnett, Senior Planner

Tim Lewis, Chief Building Official

Janet Hilts, HR Manager

Steven Dollmaier, Director of Operations

Kassandra Rocca, Director of Finance