

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent

Corporate Services

Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Cathy Hoffman, General Manager, Corporate Services/Chief Human Resources Officer

Date: May 19, 2020

Subject: Staffing Impacts related to COVID-19

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

At its May 11, 2020 meeting, Council approved the following motion as part of the list of recommendations contained in the Financial Resiliency and Covid-19 report to council, "That temporary layoffs and wage reductions be considered across the entire organization and that report be brought back to Council on June 15th."

Comments

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it a series of necessary adjustments to service levels and service delivery methods to ensure the safety of our residents, our employees and to facilitate the control of the spread of the virus.

Along with the adjustments to service levels and service delivery methods has come a corresponding impact on staffing levels. Some of our services have experienced a surge in service demand requiring an uptick in staffing and overtime hours while others were closed or canceled entirely resulting in layoffs or redeployments. Within the first two weeks of the declared emergency, changes to services, staffing and layoffs were already being made while staffing tied to business continuity was preserved.

All told, of our 1879 employees (police included), 47 employees were laid off from Library Services, 165 summer student positions were cut for the season and 121 employees took an unpaid leave of absence, for a total reduction of 333 employees, representing nearly 20% of our core workforce.

Table 1 on the following page represents the breakdown of redeployments, layoffs, unpaid leaves and summer student positions cut and broken down by department. Of note, 62% of

our employees are permanent full-time, the balance part-time, casual etc. Appendix A (Table 3) is a further breakdown by Department and Divisions.

Department	# of Perm Full-time Employees	# of Other Employees	Total # of Employees	# of Employees Active in Home Division	# of Employees Re-deployed	# of Employees Laid Off	# of Employees on Unpaid Leave	# of Student Positions Cut
Chief Administrative/Mayor's Office	7	0	7	7	0	0	0	0
Community Development	43	6	49	42	5	0	1	1
Community Human Services	406	536	942	581	104	47	115	95
Chatham-Kent Public Utilities Commission	64	6	70	66	0	0	0	4
Corporate Services	47	16	63	60	1	0	0	2
Finance, Budget & Information Technology Services	62	27	89	82	0	0	0	7
Fire & Emergency Services	80	2	82	81	0	0	0	1
Infrastructure & Engineering Services	238	177	415	360	0	0	4	51
Police	217	6	223	218	0	0	1	4
Totals	1164	776	1940	1497	110	47	121	165
Total # of employees currently off payroll								333

Of the various municipal services performed, nearly half are provincially subsidized 50%--100%.

In addition to layoffs, unpaid leaves and summer student positions cut, an additional 110 employees were redeployed to 140 different positions (some employees were deployed to more than one assignment) within the municipal organization where additional staffing has been required. Table 2 below summarizes various positions that staff were redeployed to.

Division / Location	Job Responsibility	# of Redeployment Positions (full-time and other)
Public Health - Mobile Assessment Centre	Assessment Drivers	2
Building Development Services	Provincial Order By-law Enforcement Team	4
Community Development - Administration	Administrative Support	1
Parks & Opens Spaces - Cemeteries	Cemetery Labour Assistant	1
Drainage, Asset & Waste Management	Sanitization of Municipal Buildings	3
Economic Development	Administrative Support	2
Information Technology Services	Technical Support - 2 / Admin Support - 1	3
Chatham-Kent Public Utilities Commission - PPE Collection Site	Distribution Centre Attendant	1
Seniors Services - RVG	Additional Support - various positions	63
Employment & Social Services - Bradley Centre	Shelter - various positions	39
Drainage, Asset & Waste Management	Transfer Stations Attendants	3
Engineering & Transportation - Erie Shore Drive	Road Security	15
Parks & Opens Spaces - Mitchell's Bay South Trail	Construction Site and Public Safety Security	3
Total # of redeployment positions covered by 110 redeployed employees		140

Riverview Gardens (RVG), our long-term care facility, required the most significant number of additional resources. In mid-March, during the early stages of the pandemic, dramatic steps needed to be taken to limit the exposure of residents and staff to the Corona virus. These interventions included reducing the number of family members and volunteers permitted into the home. In a facility with 320 beds, the number of different family and volunteer persons visiting in any given week is in excess of 500. To reduce the number of people coming in while at the same time preserving resident assistance, a controlled number of municipal staff from various departments whose services were either closed, canceled or delayed in deference to the pandemic priority, were trained and redeployed to RVG. Redeployment duties were grouped into either immediate needs or preparation for contingency back-up planning in the event that staff started to become ill or required personal emergency leaves. To date, due to preparation, vigilance and good fortune, there has been no COVID-19 outbreak at the facility. While this is very positive news it has meant that some redeployed staff have been less tasked than anticipated leaving some speculation about the necessity of the number redeployed. As with any contingency plan, the best scenario is one where resources are ready and not needed. As well, based on projected infection rates related to a potential second wave of COVID-19 it was imperative that we prepared accordingly which has required additional resources.

Other staff were redeployed to the urgent opening of the Community Isolation Centre, the Economic Recovery initiative, security assignments at Erie Shore Drive and construction and public safety at Mitchell's Bay South Trail, the PPE Distribution Centre and the Provincial Order By-law Enforcement team.

Redeployed staff were taken from areas such as tourism, recreation, museums, theatre, resident attraction and immigration, libraries, children's services, culture, planning and occupational safety to fill these roles.

The balance of the municipal services have continued, sometimes with required modifications to delivery. Certain other departments like Public Health, Employment and Social Services, Human Resources and Organizational Development and Legal Services experienced a surge in service requirements, to name a few.

There has been much provincial reference to essential versus non-essential workers. Typically, those definitions refer to occupations in our municipal sector to mean positions in the police, fire, paramedic type categories. During this pandemic, those terms have had specific meaning coming from the Province as it relates to businesses and services that could remain open. They include things like food, pharmacies, healthcare, government, law enforcement and emergency services, etc. While municipalities are exempt from the Province's business categorization of essential versus non-essential, we have still been obligated to close facilities or cancel programs where the Province has dictated. We have adhered to these directives and maintained the balance of services where possible to meet our usual obligations with delivery modifications to ensure compliance with social distancing.

In a recent report to Council regarding financial resiliency strategies, the following services were recommended and approved for closure or reduction as follows:

- a. Arenas for ice and non-ice activities
- b. Outdoor pools
- c. Reduced service level of grass cutting for all sports fields and parklands
- d. Reduced service level of grass trimming
- e. Elimination of horticulture flower planting and maintenance
- f. Recreation programming – except virtual recreation programming for all ages
- g. Summer camp programs
- h. Cancellation of hiring summer students across the organization with the exception of Public Health, Riverview Gardens and Engineering.
- i. Cancellation of computer desktop replacement program for 2020
- j. Capture of travel and conference training savings due to cancellations
- k. Capture of employee benefit savings related to closure of non-essential service providers
- l. Capture of utility savings of closed facilities and changes to electricity costing
- m. Indoor pools
- n. Outdoor soccer fields and baseball facilities
- o. Splash pads, tennis courts, skateboard parks and playground equipment
- p. Marinas and campgrounds
- q. Special events on municipal property
- r. Banner hanging in downtowns
- s. Museums, theatres and cultural facilities
- t. Libraries
- u. John D Bradley Convention Centre (except for temporary shelter)
- v. Recreation halls / meeting room rentals

In due course, our financial team will be able to report back on the costs incurred as a result of the pandemic and cost offsets resulting from the closings and reductions. This analysis along with the evaluation of the bottom line economic impact the pandemic has had on our community will assist administration in determining any additional recommendations for cost savings and reductions to bring forward for the 2021 budget.

In relative terms, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's employment response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been similar to the majority of municipalities who have reported out on this topic. Municipalities have laid off staff as a result of service level reductions. Some municipalities have opted not to lay off staff even with service reductions.

While we recognize that we are only part way through the COVID-19 crisis, staff have been stellar in their commitment and compassion. Some have worked tirelessly while others have experienced family economic loss. We will continue to monitor service requirements and adjust staffing accordingly as phased re-openings begin.

Consultation

Members of the Executive Management Team have been consulted on various elements of this report.

Financial Implications

As mentioned above, a full financial analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be provided to Council at a future date.

Prepared by:

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Attachment: Appendix A Table 3 – Employment Status by Department and Division

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Table 3 - Employment Status by Department and Division

Department / Division	# of Employees	# of Employees Active in Home Division	# of Employees Re-deployed	# of Employees Laid Off	# of Employees on Unpaid Leave	# of Student Positions Cut
Chief Administrative/Mayor's Office						
CAO/Mayor's Office	7	7	0	0	0	0
Chief Administrative/Mayor's Office Totals	7	7	0	0	0	0
Community Development						
CD -Administration	3	3	0	0	0	0
Building Development Services	12	11	0	0	0	1
Economic Development Services	12	12	0	0	0	0
Legal Services	6	5	1	0	0	0
Planning Services	8	6	2	0	0	0
Provincial Offences Court	8	5	2	0	1	0
Community Development Totals	49	42	5	0	1	1
Community Human Services						
Administration	3	3	0	0	0	0
Childcare & Early Years	23	2	19	0	1	1
CK Library Services	69	0	11	47	9	2
Community Attraction & Leisure Services	216	8	43	0	64	67
Employment & Social Services	103	74	24	0	0	5
Housing Services	29	28	0	0	0	1
Public Health	93	81	7	0	3	2
Seniors Services (RVG)	406	385	0	0	38	17
Community Human Services Totals	942	581	104	47	115	95
Chatham-Kent Public Utilities Commission	70	66	0	0	0	4
Chatham-Kent Public Utilities Commission Totals	70	66	0	0	0	4
Corporate Services						
Administration	3	3	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	30	29	0	0	0	1
HROD	20	19	1	0	0	0
Municipal Governance	10	9	0	0	0	1
Corporate Services Totals	63	60	1	0	0	2
Finance, Budget & Information Technology Services						
Administration	2	2	0	0	0	0
Budget & Performance	4	4	0	0	0	0
Finance	38	36	0	0	0	2
ITS	45	40	0	0	0	5
Finance, Budget & Information Technology Services Totals	89	82	0	0	0	7
Fire & Emergency Services						
Administration	8	7	0	0	0	1
Fire & Emergency Services	74	74	0	0	0	0
Fire & Emergency Services Totals	82	81	0	0	0	1
Infrastructure & Engineering Services						
Administration	2	2	0	0	0	0
Engineering & Transportation Services	32	31	0	0	0	1
Drainage, Asset & Waste Management	67	63	0	0	0	2
Parks & Open Spaces	153	105	0	0	4	30
Public Works	161	159	0	0	0	18
Infrastructure & Engineering Services Totals	415	360	0	0	4	51
Police Services	223	218	0	0	1	4
Police Totals	223	218	0	0	1	4
Totals	1940	1497	110	47	121	165