
Memorandum

CAO 10-2020 Appendix 5

Subject: COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Corporate Services
Date: April 23, 2020
To: Regional Council
From: Todd Harrison, Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Treasurer

Corporate Services delivers efficient and innovative service excellence to external and internal customers in an integrated and timely manner.

During this pandemic, our staff have continued this support function for core businesses within our group and for operating departments. In addition, Corporate Services has provided critical support to the Emergency Operations Committee (EOC).

The following provides an overview of activity that has taken place and a projection of expected service delivery moving forward.

CONSTRUCTION, ENERGY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (CE&FM)

Current Status of Operations

The CE&FM group is divided into two main groups, Construction and Facilities Management. This team has played an important role in the Regional EOC.

The Construction unit has continued to deliver construction projects for the Region up to such time that the provincial legislation for essential construction projects was refined. As a result, staff have worked with contractors to pause projects deemed non essential, most notably NRPS District 1. As a result, a reduced number of projects have continued, these include:

- Installation of backup generators at Headquarters;
- Transfer of backup 911 equipment to a new site; and
- Continuation of construction drawings for long term care facilities.

The Facilities Management Team has been an essential component of the Region's EOC. Some of the functions performed in this capacity are:

- Coordinated the sourcing of essential supplies in collaboration with other departments;
- Continuing Operations and Maintenance of all opened facilities including enhanced cleaning protocols to ensure safe working environment for essential staff not working from home;
- Coordinating emergency procurements of PPE and other supplies that are critical to business continuity for essential services;
- Upgrading facilities with social distancing barriers, protective screens;
- Responding to internal client needs for changes in normal operations, special moves and health & safety concerns;
- Enhanced security monitoring of sites with reduced and or no staff on site; and
- Coordinating shipping/receiving and securement of critical supply needs.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

The Construction team will continue to work on essential construction sites, will continue to prepare projects for construction once the pandemic eases and will support the EOC in identifying and securing critical supplies throughout the pandemic.

The Facilities Management team will continue to maintain sites that remain operational to ensure these facilities are available, functional and clean for all staff required to work in these sites.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING (FMP)

Current Status of Operations

As indicated, all of the Corporate Services Departments continue to deliver core services while at the same time perform a significant number of duties to support the Regional EOC.

FMP staff have continued to support core business functions during the pandemic. Some highlights of these actions include:

- Complete the 2019 year end audit;

- Develop 2020 tax bylaws and provide required necessary report and bylaws; and
- Work with Public Works to develop financial implications of SNF water treatment plant.

Alternatively, FMP has a main role in the Region's EOC as part of the Finance and Administration Unit. Highlights include:

- Development and implementation of procedures for cost reporting and tracking;
- Review of Regional capital projects in light of provincial legislative essential construction business and Regional capacity to complete;
- Implementation of on-line/credit card payments for services such as business licenses, garbage bag tags, planning and transportation permits, long term accommodations, etc.;
- Support HR in development of cost tracking system to facilitate staff redeployment to essential services in pandemic; and
- Extensive cash flow analysis and business continuity planning in conjunction with local municipalities.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

FMP staff will continue to deliver support to the EOC to ensure that financial reporting is timely and accurate for operating departments and Council. This activity will include working with area municipalities in a cooperative fashion on cash flows, debenture issues and other financial matters so that essential services can be maintained.

Alternatively, the support of critical core business will continue. In May, Council will receive a presentation from our auditors on the 2019 financial statements. In June, staff will provide the plan for the 2021 Budget.

PROCUREMENT AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS (PSA)

Current Status of Operations

Similar to other departments within Corporate Services, PSA staff have delivered by supporting core business functions while taking on additional projects to support the Region's EOC.

Highlights of activity during the operational period includes:

- Facilitating new and ongoing procurements culminating in award;
- Realty related works for inflight projects, leases and licenses;
- PeopleSoft Change PO's, Supplier and PCard administration; and
- Sourcing critical PPE and supplies needed for the EOC response to the pandemic.

In addition, Procurement has completed the transition to full eBidding and effective immediately, all procurement bid documents issued include the requirement for electronic submissions.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

The Region's review of essential projects both capital and operational has resulted in a prioritization of formal procurements moving forward. This will continue throughout the pandemic and afterwards.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (ITS)

Current Status of Operations

Similar to other departments within Corporate Services, ITS staff have delivered by supporting core business functions while taking on additional established projects to support the Region's EOC.

Highlights of initiatives completed during the pandemic include the following:

- Put the tools, technology and processes in place to enable and support the move towards large numbers of staff working from home;
- Developed operational data driven dashboards for Public Health, Community Services and EOC to help monitor and manage workload and staff capacity;
- Developed staff redeployment portal to help facilitate the management of requests for additional or redeployed staff related to COVID-19 priorities; and
- Working with Clerks Department to move Council and Committee meetings to an all-digital platform to support physical distancing requirements.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

Continue to support critical technology infrastructure to ensure the Region delivers key services. Continue to support EOC as required.

As part of the Region's continual desire to improve customer services, the pandemic has provided an opportunity to accelerate new service delivery models. Specifically, the requirement of a rapid move to remote workers and limited in-person visits has accelerated a number of initiatives at the Region. Remote workers have become the normal with little impact to service – in fact, some areas are adopting very quickly to this model and seeing more engaged staff. Service areas that were considered primarily in-person services such as SAEO are now servicing clients remotely over phones from staffs' "home office". Online text and video chat was implemented to address new challenges in public health – text chat now represents about 25% of the COVID-19 support calls. There is an opportunity for us to document and adopt some of these and other new practices as an enhanced future state for the organization.

LEGAL SERVICES

Current Status of Operations

As indicated, all of the Corporate Services Departments continue to deliver core services while at the same time perform a significant number of duties to support the Regional EOC.

The Legal team provides a key role in the Region's EOC. The team has responded to significant number of new provincial legislation and announcements throughout the pandemic period. Highlights of advice provided to EOC:

- Advise on response to construction legislation related to essential services;
- Risk Management advice on building screening and security issues; and
- Various legal advice during pandemic.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

The Legal team will continue to provide advice and deliver services to operational departments on core business activities. The insurance RFP is on-going and is expected to be completed in the fall.

COURT SERVICES

Current Status of Operations

The Court Services team is overseen by the Region's legal department on behalf of the joint board of management, between the Region and area municipalities.

Highlights of operational charges to Court Services:

- Court matters have been adjourned to May 29;
- Timelines have been extended for the duration of emergency;
- At present, POA building closed to the public but telephone/email service continue;
- Enforcement agencies continue to file charges with unit; and
- On-going contact with Municipal Attorney General Offices and Local Administrative Justice of the Peace.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

Continue responding to public enquiries and requests from enforcement agencies while awaiting resumption of regular court proceedings.

BUSINESS LICENSING

Current Status of Operations

Similar to the other departments in Corporate Services, the Business Licensing unit has continued to operate with core service delivery as well as play a role in the Region's EOC. These activities are identified separately.

Business License

- Most license renewals deferred until May 29;
- License renewals for operating businesses (taxi/TNC, towing and salvage) continue; and
- Services still remain available via a modified email application process for license holders; and
- Staff field and answer email correspondence from license holders, process licence renewals via email with payment over the phone, investigate complaints, provide enforcement and schedule inspections.

Provincial Order Enforcement

The provincial government's announcement for stricter enforcement of social distancing and business' temporary closings resulted in an enhanced bylaw enforcement. In cooperation and coordination with local municipalities, the Region's enforcement team has increased its how's of operations to respond to increased complaints.

- Staff have been re-assigned to enforce the Provincial Orders and remain assigned to an evening shift schedule Saturday to Tuesday supported by staff from Tobacco Enforcement. Staff remain assigned to this until further notice or when the orders and state of emergency is lifted; and
- Staff respond to after-hours calls to assist the local response and also monitor the Region's six public open space properties, and ensure Region licensed businesses that are non-essential remain closed.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

The Regional Enforcement Manager will continue to work in cooperation with local municipalities, NRPS and other Regional departments in a coordinated approach to enforcement of the social distancing legislation until the pandemic eases.

The business license bylaw review is ongoing and will likely come before Council after the pandemic eases.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner of Corporate Services and
Regional Treasurer