



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: COVID-19 uncertainty leads to staffing and service level impacts for the Town of Oxford

OXFORD, Nova Scotia – With the continued impacts and uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town of Oxford has made some difficult decisions for temporary impacts to staffing and community service levels.

Without clarity on when public health directives around social gatherings and physical distancing will be downgraded, the ability for the Town of Oxford to maintain regular staffing and programming has been negatively impacted. In the very early stages of the pandemic, essential services were identified as governance/legislated decision-making, sewer, water, streets, accounts payable and receivable, payroll, information technology, and communications. This creates a shortage of work for some areas within the organization not involved in the delivery of critical and essential municipal government services.

It is regrettable that temporary layoffs for staff outside those functions will be implemented later this week, and the Town is not anticipating hiring summer students for this year. This will impact service levels within the community over the next several months for organized recreation programs, individual business supports, event planning, and greenspace development and maintenance.

While the financial implications with these decisions are between \$8,000-9,000 per month, the primary criteria considered for these decisions around bringing additional individuals into the workplace is occupational health and safety. With resources already stretched to meet sanitizing and physical distancing requirements, adding students to the staffing compliment is not something that can be done safely.

The Town will regularly evaluate the changing requirements around the COVID-19 pandemic to be able to meet its obligations around staffing and financial management for the best long-term results for the community. Impacts on service levels and programming into the future will also need to be considered as this public health threat continues to evolve.

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