

Message from Mayor Rob Keffer:
COVID-19 update - March 24

In today's update I want to talk about three key things: first, the COVID-19 situation in BWG and Simcoe-Muskoka; second, what Council is doing to help residents with financial pressures; and third, how the Town is helping local businesses.

The latest update from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is that there are 12 confirmed cases in the Simcoe-Muskoka area, with two people now deceased, four in hospital and the rest recovering from home. (<https://bit.ly/3bntBMP>) Two of these cases cannot be traced back to travel or to close contact with a known patient; therefore, maintaining social distancing and good handwashing habits remains critical.

Across Ontario, non-essential businesses and services will be closing as of midnight tonight. Many Town services are considered essential and will therefore continue, including fire and emergency services, water and wastewater treatment, public transit, road maintenance and snow removal, by-law enforcement, animal control, and issuing permits and licences (if urgently required). As much as possible, our staff are working from home. Where that's not possible, staff are required to follow guidelines for social distancing and sanitization.

Council has called a special meeting for Thursday (March 26) at 7 p.m. We will meet electronically so if you like you can watch the video of me talking to my fellow council members on a conference call! It may not be exciting viewing, but we will be discussing very important matters including relief for property tax and utility bill payments, and support to local businesses. There will be links to the video provided on our social media accounts as well as our website at www.townofbwg.com/covid There will also be Facebook and Twitter posts made throughout the meeting as decisions are made, and a complete overview will be shared immediately afterwards.

Finally, staff from the Office of Economic Development have been coordinating relief efforts for local businesses along with the County, neighbouring municipalities and partner agencies. If you are a local business owner, please take an online survey to tell us how your business is being affected by COVID-19 and how we can help. You'll find the link on our COVID-19 Business Resources page: www.gotobwg.ca/covid-19-business-resources

Also on this page you'll find details on business loans and consulting services being offered through our partner, Nottawasaga Futures. After Thursday's Council meeting, we will add details on the financial assistance that the Town will make available to local businesses.

If you're looking for ways to keep yourselves and your families entertained while social distancing, I encourage you to visit our Library and Leisure Centre Facebook pages. Staff have been sharing lots of ideas for staying physically and mentally busy, including virtual storytimes, exercise videos, craft and game ideas and more.

Please take care of yourselves and each other, and check back daily for new updates.

Best,
Rob Keffer