

Mayor's Message – April 7, 2020

Today I want to share with you the City of Salmon Arm's 4 point Economic Response and Recovery Plan.

Up to this time, your City Council has made decisions based on two pillars:

1. The health and safety of City residents and employees; and
2. The delivery of essential services.

These continue to be our primary considerations in our decision making.

We also recognize that the effects COVID-19 is having on our economy and specifically on many of our residents.

The uncertainty of how long the virus will persist causes many of us to feel both health and economic stress.

We support the measures taken thus far from the Provincial and Federal Governments.

Council feels it is important for local government to also do it's part.

Yesterday, Council authorized a 4 point response and recovery plan:

1. A 0% tax increase across all classes for the 2020 year. Council's rationale, is that we truly are all in this together, so any tax benefit should be across the board. To do this, Council needed to revisit the budget and recover \$523 000.
2. Extension of the tax deadline until July 30th across all classes. This will provide a little more breathing room for everyone.
3. Workforce reduction and hiring freeze. Council wanted to keep our employees working as long as possible. After almost 3 weeks of our recreation facilities being closed, and with no revenues through admissions or rentals we needed to act. Just like many of our retail outlets, when customers cannot come in, staying open is not sustainable. This lay-off involves 30 employees, most whom are life guards and front desk staff at our pool and arena.
4. Delay of the tendering of the RSU. We would like to be building the underpass right now – the time is ideal, however despite our best efforts, there are engineering delays. We are delaying the tendering process until July 15, with construction in the fall of 2020.

Council believes that large projects like the RSU and the Salmon River West Highway project will be important accelerators to our local work force, come September.

In closing I'd like to remind everyone of Dr. Bonnie Henry's advice. We need to stay steadfast in our following of the health guidelines:

- physical distancing
- mixing only with people you live with
- isolation if ill or if you have arrived from out of our area.

Now is the time to be more vigilant than ever.

Thank you