

Mayor's Report- Thursday May 13, 2021

First thing in today's report is my acknowledgement of National Nurses Week and most especially our resident nurse, Councillor Fran Kelly-Chamberlain! Thanks to all the nurses who provide us with excellent care and compassion when we are most vulnerable.

Since our last meeting four weeks ago we remain under a provincial STAY-AT-HOME order. RCDHU vaccination clinics are expanding to include new groups this week and residents are asked to register online (if possible) as it is the fastest way. The numbers of COVID-19 in Ontario are trending downward but unfortunately nowhere near the point where we can breathe a sigh of relief.

On the morning of April 23rd, I attended a virtual meeting chaired by Joanna Reading of the Ontario Solicitor General's Office (SOLGEN) and Graham Wight the area representative of SOLGEN. The purpose of this meeting with the local municipalities' Mayors was to explain and discuss the proposed framework and composition of the Upper Ottawa Valley Ontario Provincial Police (UOVOPP) Service Board/s. **Only one proposal per detachment** is due on June 7th, 2021. A follow up ZOOM meeting this week on May 11th was hosted by the Town of Petawawa with Admaston/Bromley (served by 2 detachments), Head Clara & Maria, Laurentian Hills, Laurentian Valley, North Algona Wilberforce (served by 2 detachments), Pembroke and Whitewater Region (served by 2 detachments), in attendance. There is a report and a resolution for today's meeting concerning this topic.

On the afternoon of April 23rd Premier Ford and Ministers Jones, McNaughton, Elliott & Clark held a call to Heads of Council for a COVID update to municipalities.

County Council met virtually on April 28th. In the Warden's Address to Council, she reminded us that we were in our 14th month of the pandemic and should remember to be kind to ourselves and others! We heard a delegation from Algonquin College. Updates included an interesting initiative with the local school boards to encourage high school students into the trades with programming in their schools during their Grade 12 year. The 2022 Ontario Winter Games Chairman, Peter Emon introduced the Games Manager Cindy Burwell, long distance from Geneva – soon to be back home in Calabogie. The Winter Games will be held over 2 weekends – February 24th and March 6th, 2022.

Some provincial business grants of local interest can be found at Ontario.ca advertised as - **Coming soon: Ontario Tourism and Hospitality Small Business Support Grant**. The government is introducing the new Ontario Tourism and Hospitality Small Business Support Grant, which will provide an estimated \$100 million in one-time payments of \$10,000 to \$20,000 to eligible small businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector. When we hear of the opening of this granting opportunity, we pass it on to local businesses.

At the biweekly DRDH & local Mayors ZOOM call on May 6th, CEO Janna Hotson informed us that the former physiotherapy area has been converted to bed space and planning is underway to resume to full hospital services when the time is right. There will be a gradual reopening of LTC when all parties are fully vaccinated. That afternoon area Mayors heard from RCDHU Dr. Cushman that there is good news on the horizon, although it had been our community's worse week yet. Many infections have originated in workplaces and without a doubt the COVID-19 variants will travel 100% within a home or business. As local leaders, we must message PATIENCE to our citizens.

At the COR Health Committee yesterday, May 12th Chief Nolan of the Paramedic Service shared some very alarming statistics of opioid overdoses in our county. From his Emergency Services Department report, "One year ago, Paramedics responded to approximately one overdose per week. Two months ago, it was approximately two per week. Last month Paramedics responded to one overdose per day. This past week there have been multiple overdoses daily. This crisis is impacting families, resources, and the economy already vulnerable from the pandemic." Thankfully, the Emergency Services Department is developing a strategic response with RCDHU in application for a Naloxone (Narcan) kit supply through the Ministry of Health, Naloxone Ontario project. Soon Naloxone kits will be available for distribution by Paramedics.

Mayor Debbi Grills